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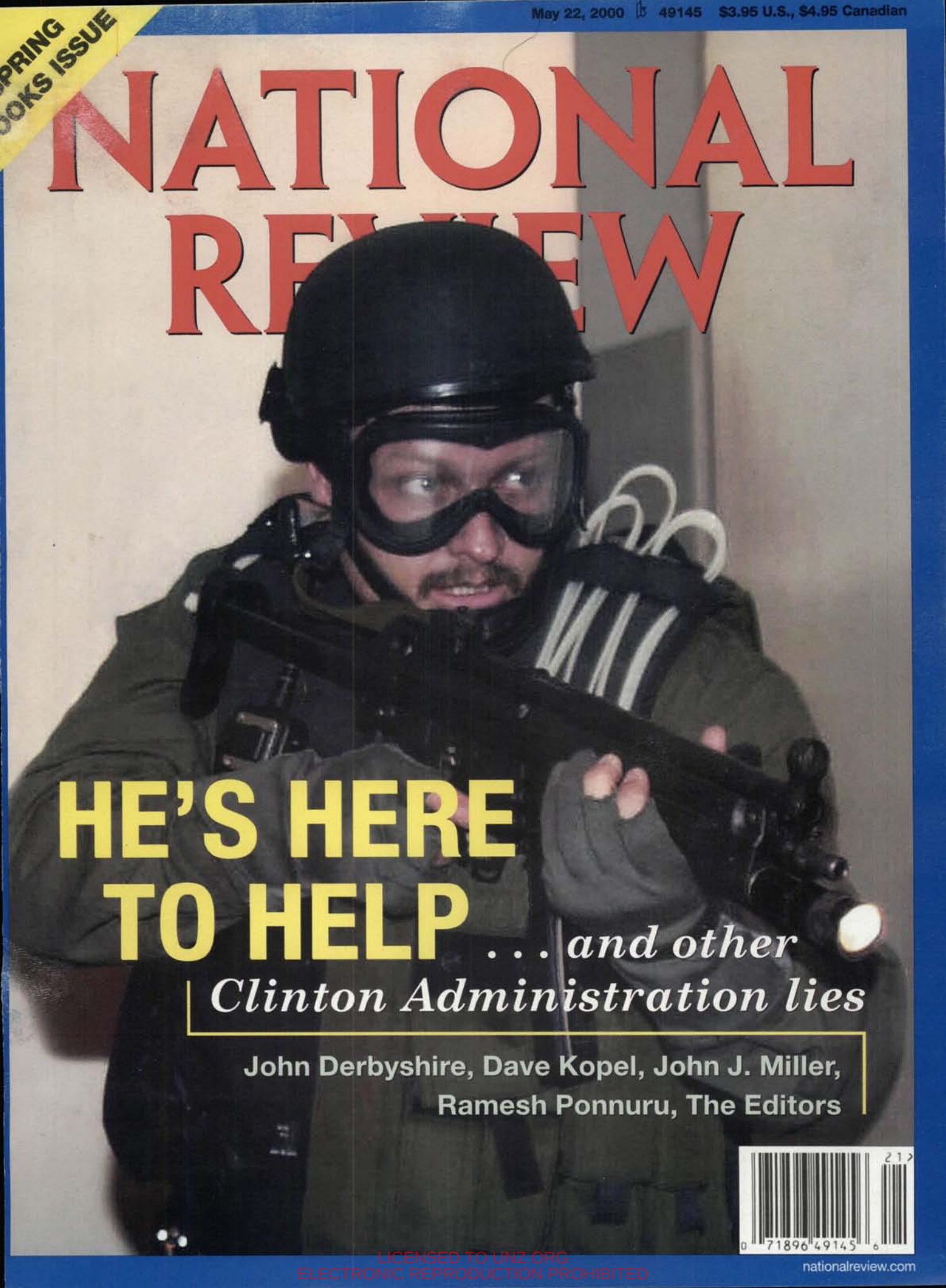
SPRING BOOKS ISSUE

NATIONAL REVIEW



HE'S HERE TO HELP . . . *and other Clinton Administration lies*

John Derbyshire, Dave Kopel, John J. Miller, Ramesh Ponnuru, The Editors

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ LETTERS ■

CONSERVATIVES AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

For years, conservatives have argued that the Constitution requires neutrality with regard to race and have assailed liberals for attacking neutral laws just because they don't like the results. Now that overt racial preferences are being replaced by racially neutral forms of affirmative action, many conservatives are abandoning their previous position and sounding a lot like liberals ("Preferences for (Almost) All," by John O'Sullivan, April 17).

We simply have to acknowledge that we have not fulfilled the promise of equal opportunity to millions in our society. To counteract abysmal public schooling and regulatory rules that are rigged against the poor, it is appropriate to use true (i.e., nonracial) affirmative action to level the playing field. Because minorities are disproportionately among the poor, they will benefit disproportionately from such programs. But the point is that they will do so not because they are minorities, but because they are truly disadvantaged.

The most serious question asked of those of us who would ban government's power to discriminate on the basis of race is: What should we do to help those for whom the playing field is not level? For some conservatives, the answer is nothing—and that is why the GOP is becoming the minority party (but not the party of minorities). For leaders with vision, like Jeb Bush, the answer is race-neutral efforts to clear away barriers to opportunity.

Where racial considerations seep into the process, we should diligently remove them. But to morally equate a "talented 20" program with racial preferences is not only wrong, it suggests that we have lost sight of our commitment to opportunity.

Clint Bolick
Institute for Justice
Washington, D.C.

Congratulations to John O'Sullivan for clear thinking about race and gender privileges. He understands that basing privileges on need instead of race and gender does nothing to restore equality under the law.

Quotas are expanding despite public opposition, referenda, and court decisions because most of those who oppose quotas accept the analyses and decisions that led to quotas. For example, both Clint Bolick and Stephan Thernstrom accept *Brown* v. *Board of Education* and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Both were explicitly based on the presumption that white Americans are so irredeemably racist that democracy would forever uphold segregation. With goodwill and persuasion dismissed as ineffective, coercion was employed as the remedy for segregation.

Brown's aftermath is not merely busing and racial preferences, but also judicial usurpation of legislative power. The Civil Rights Act extended *Brown*'s premise of inexorable racism from politics to private life. It reflects the belief that freedom of conscience would perpetuate racial discrimination in private affairs just as democracy would perpetuate segregation in public life.

Until we understand that *Brown* and the 1964 act attacked not only racial discrimination but also the foundations of civil society—goodwill and freedom of conscience—we have little chance of reclaiming self-rule and equality under law.

Paul Craig Roberts
Panama City Beach, Fla.

THREE STRIKES

What's up with your April 17 issue ("Man's Best Friend")? Your "cover story" on guns consists of three short, pointless articles that don't really say much of anything. It seems you've squandered the opportunity to add something meaningful to the debate. As a subscriber and a strong supporter of the Second Amendment, I find that most unfortunate.

Aaron Broaddus
Highland Park, Ill.

Dave Kopel states that gun-control advocates have put forward lies, exaggerations, and skewed statistics ("An Army of Gun Lies"). This is the same as the pot calling the kettle black, since both sides on this issue are equally guilty. Example: Kopel says "assault

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rifles" do not fire any faster than ordinary rifles and that the bullets are less powerful. He needs to check his source. Assault rifles, many based on the Russian AK-47, were designed specifically to fire on full automatic, like a machine gun, in order to provide the regular infantryman with the fire power of a machine gun. If they were merely semi-automatic they would be of no more use than the World War II M-1 Garand or the M-1 carbine, which were semi-automatic. Additionally, if they were not fully automatic they would not require such a large magazine.

Even strict gun controls would never completely eliminate gun accidents or gun violence, but some commonsense measures could reduce both. If people on both sides of this issue would get off their high horses and start working together, I'm sure that an acceptable system could be worked out. So far the two sides have acted like schoolboys yelling epithets at each other.

I'm no liberal. I grew up in a small town in Vermont and had my own rifle at the age of eight. No self-respecting hunter or competition shooter, however, would have any use for an assault weapon.

Malcolm L. Torrey
Carmichael, Calif.

DAVE KOPEL RESPONDS: *Mr. Torrey's letter shows how effective the gun-ban groups and their media puppets have been in confusing many well-intentioned gun owners. The phrase "assault rifles" is a military term of art for the types of rifle that Mr. Torrey knows about. My article, however, never mentions "assault rifles." Rather, my discussion is about "so-called 'assault weapons.'" Just read the federal law that bans "so-called assault weapons" and you won't find a single "full automatic" weapon. Instead, the Clinton/Feinstein ban on "assault weapons" applies only to firearms that are not automatic. The banned guns simply look military, because they use black plastic stocks instead of brown wooden ones, or have other cosmetically incorrect features.*

A 1988 report from the Violence Policy Center recognized that the prohibitionist cause would be greatly aided by the confusion of people like Mr. Torrey: "The semiautomatic weapons' menacing looks, coupled with the public's confusion over fully automatic machine guns versus semi-automatic assault weapons—anything that looks like a machine gun is assumed to be a machine gun—can only increase the chance of public support for restrictions on these weapons."

Dave Shiflett misses his target ("In Defense of Brother Heat"). SKS assault rifles in the hands of four-year-olds? A firing range in his dormitory room? A self-inflicted, accidental gunshot? Good ol' boys may chuckle at his man's-man defense of the Peacemaker, but surely he has added to the perception that gun owners are too irresponsible to be trusted with this freedom.

John W. Lehner
Clyde, Ohio

THE CHINESE THREAT

John O'Sullivan ("A Yellow Peril? No," May 1) rightly notes the nonideological nature of the Chinese threat to America. He underestimates, however, the potential for the PRC to threaten U.S. interests in the western Pacific.

Chinese military success proves that the PLA does not seek to match America ship for ship or missile for missile. Instead, the PLA preaches asymmetrical warfare—our Aegis cruisers countered by their Sunbeam anti-ship missiles (which even the U.S. Navy admits it might not be able to counter); our air force countered by their Russian-made S-300 surface-to-air weapons; and our destroyers countered by a tremendous number of naval mines (which were quite effective in the 1991 Gulf War). To dismiss the Chinese military threat as insignificant is to ignore the lessons of history. The one-sided arms race the PRC is now engaged in with the U.S. does not resemble the Anglo-German naval race of the early 20th century. Instead, the PRC apparently wishes to challenge the U.S. above and below the conventional level. Above, by modernizing its road-missile strategic rocket force. Below, by employing cheap, effective solutions (mines and missiles) to some very expensive problems—the ships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Christopher M. Griffith
Maywood, N.J.

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CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Ramesh Ponnuru's article "Oh, Arianna!" (May 1) would give a more accurate picture of Arianna Huffington if it told about her two tremendous contributions to the conservative cause. Her first book, *The Female Woman*, is still the best book explaining the fundamental irrationality of the feminists—their demand for a gender-neutral society.

And all who believe that the stakes in the culture war are important owe Mrs. Huffington a debt of everlasting gratitude for her monumental biography of Pablo Picasso. It stripped off his phony mask of art and explained how he "mastered the publicity game before the world knew that such a game existed."

Mrs. Huffington performed an international service to truth by exposing Picasso's hypocrisy: his sadistic abuse of women concealed behind his love of peace, and his life pattern as a destroyer of women, friends, values, and traditional beauty concealed behind his pretensions of art. Picasso's disordered paintings were mirrors of his 90-year lifetime of abusing, beating, and deliberately humiliating a long succession of women who loved him.

Phyllis Schlafly
Alton, Ill.

GOLDEN NUGGET

On your editorial "Are We Still America?" (May 1) all I can say is: Well said! You found the nugget of hard truth in all the media blah-blah for days and weeks about the Elián affair. Thank you, thank you.

Barry Aronson
Walnut Creek, Calif.

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Clinton**: "I'm not ashamed of the fact that [the House of Representatives] impeached me." . . . Clinton's non-denial denial, on whether he seeks pardon: "I have no interest in it, I wouldn't ask for it, I don't think it would be necessary. . . . I am prepared to stand before any bar of justice I have to stand before." . . . Clinton, responding to 9-year-old boy asking how president uses his computer: "I confess I don't use it much for e-mail, but that's for very personal reasons. . . . If you work for the government, you don't use e-mail very much unless you want it all in the newspapers."

■ **Al Gore**, to gay activists on getting their endorsement: "It was politically incorrect for you to say your preference was Al Gore, but it's okay to say you were oriented towards me." . . . In *Washington Post* profile, Gore credits own role in "dinner table debates" with father to explain **Albert Gore Sr.**'s support of civil-rights legislation in 1960s. . . . Actor **Rick Schroeder** calls Gore a "phony" in *George*: "He's been in Washington way too long. He's so calculating." . . . Former Carter chief of staff **Hamilton Jordan**, on how he'll vote this November, in *Washington Post*: "I'll probably write in **John McCain**." . . . Gore, on whether he would choose a Republican running mate: "I don't completely rule it out." . . . In Rasmussen Research poll, **George W. Bush** pulls ahead of Gore in California, 37 percent to 36 percent. . . . Bush taps former defense secretary **Dick Cheney** to head vice-presidential selection process. . . . Wisconsin governor **Tommy Thompson** named head of platform committee for GOP convention. . . . In Princeton Research Associates poll of hypothetical match-up, Bush leads Clinton, 49 percent to 44 percent.

■ Lt. Gen. **Claudia Kennedy**, whose political affiliation is unknown, in *Parade*: "I think I could be a wonderful vice president—but give me 10 years. I will have done things that will broaden my experience beyond the military." . . . Clinton attends fundraiser for Rep. **Michael Forbes** (D., N.Y.), ex-Republican who voted to impeach. . . . **Jay Leno** makes donation at Clinton fundraiser in Beverly Hills. . . . Following defeat in primary, in which some colleagues endorsed his opponent, Rep. **Matthew Martinez** (D., Calif.) abandons party on House votes. . . . Teamsters endorse Rep. **Peter Hoekstra** (R., Mich.), who earned rating of zero on one union scorecard, for leading probe of previous president **Ron Carey** and making possible **Jimmy Hoffa**'s election. . . . California prepares to make birthday of union leader **César Chavez** a state holiday.

■ **Sen. Bob Graham** (D., Fla.) says Clinton and chief of staff **John Podesta** promised him that **Elián** would not be snatched in the dark. González contro-

"Well, if you plan to grow up and go to law school and sue me, you'd better learn to read."

versy thought to hurt Graham's chances of being Gore's veep. . . . **Beatriz Hernandez**, neighbor of Elián González's relatives in Miami, on seizure of boy: "I feel like I'm back in Cuba in 1960. That's the way I feel right now. I've been here 40 years. I never, never thought anything like this would happen." . . . *Washington Post* columnist **Mary McGrory** writes that **Jesse Helms** "is just as much a dictator as **Castro**." . . . At Earth Day event, actor **Chevy Chase** tells TV newsmagazine *American Investigator* that "sometimes socialism works" and "Cuba might prove that."

■ **Billy Graham**'s alma mater, Wheaton College, plans to drop "Crusaders" mascot. . . . New York abortionist and obstetrician gets probation for carving initials into woman's abdomen after delivering her baby. . . . **Anita Hill** signed on to provide Court TV commentary on Supreme Court, particularly race, gender, and sexual-harassment cases. . . . In American Civil Rights Institute poll, 77 percent say government should not ask respondents' race on official forms. . . . Rutherford Institute challenges New Jersey school district that suspended four kindergarten students for playground offense of pretending to "shoot" other students with fingers. . . . **Christopher Summers** launches think tank called Tax Reform for Maryland (www.taxreformformaryland.org) to argue for lower taxes. . . . New York City paid out $57 million to people who sued for tripping on sidewalks last year. . . . **Rush Limbaugh** mentioned as possible co-host for *Monday Night Football* this fall.

■ Russian Communist party chief **Gennady Zyuganov** on 130th anniversary of **Lenin**'s birth: "Lenin is more relevant than ever." . . . New Russian presidential economic adviser **Andrei Illarionov** cites **Ayn Rand** as influence, declares "Every tax acts against our freedom." . . . In program praised by president **Alberto Fujimori**, Peruvian police begin recruiting women for traffic-patrol jobs because they are stricter and more disciplined than men. . . . Playboy Enterprises reprimands Romanian edition of magazine for publishing "How to Beat Your Wife Without Leaving Traces." . . . Japan requires export license for Sony PlayStation2, due in U.S. markets this fall, because of potential military applications. . . . Swarms of locusts, estimated at 100 billion, plague Australia. . . . DNA tests reveal boy who died in Paris prison in 1795 was indeed, despite theories to contrary, son of King **Louis XVI** and **Marie-Antoinette**. . . . Effort to bring food and medicine to famine-ridden Ethiopia being organized by **Nicholas Lambrou**, Archbishop of the Autocephalous Eastern Orthodox Archdiocese of the Americas; phone: (718) 784-3444.

■ Even Clinton has trouble with higher gas prices: presidential limo runs out of fuel on way to Las Vegas golf course. **NR**

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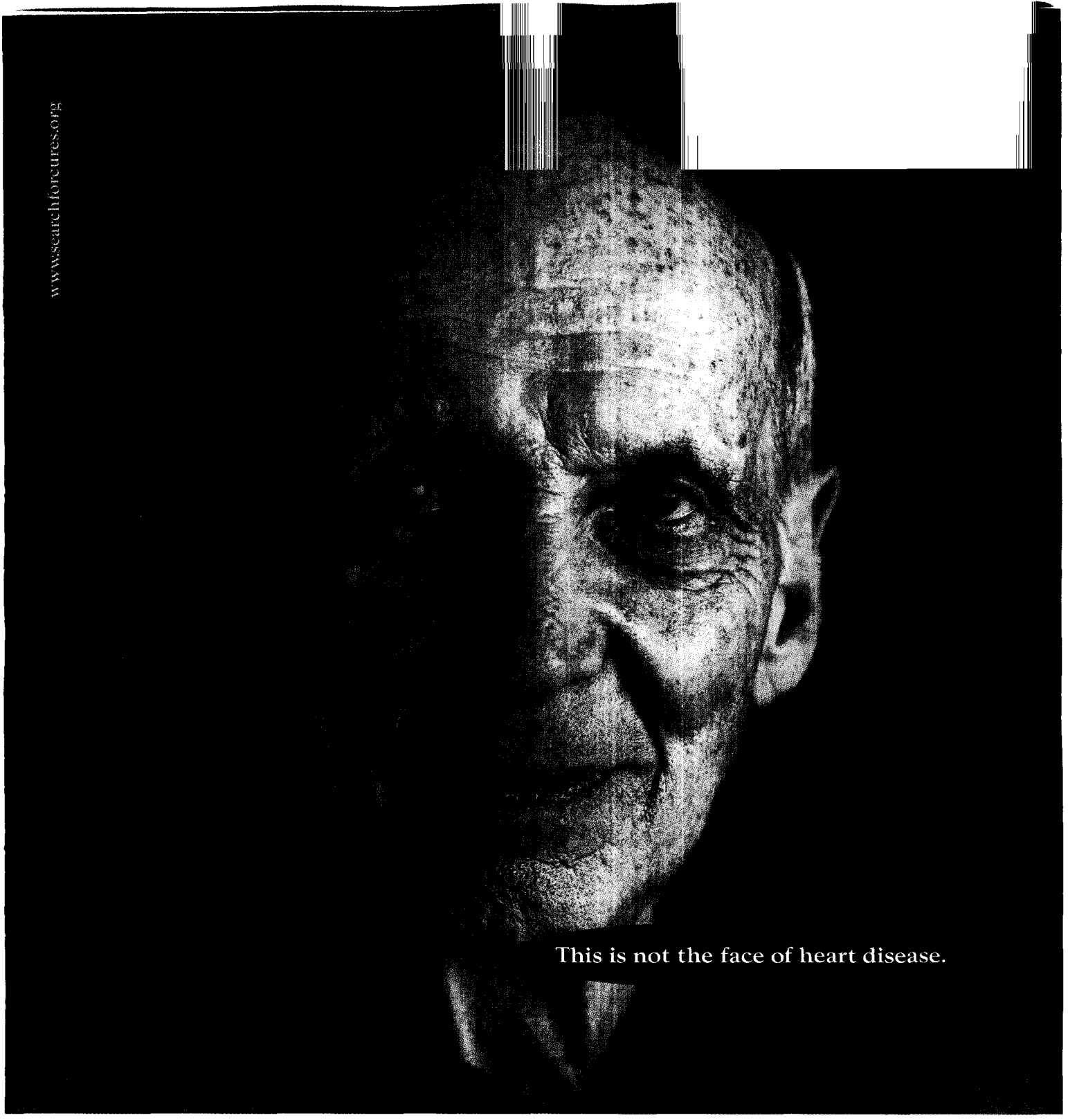

It's the face of Charles Dubin—choir singer, moviegoer and retired TV director. Four years ago, Charles had "a funny feeling in his chest." When Charles heard the words "heart disease" from his doctor, he feared losing his independence and his ability to enjoy life fully. But, thanks to effective medicines, today he's enjoying an active retirement. And, with his new healthier lifestyle, Charles is also doing his part to keep his heart in shape. Heart disease is the leading cause of death among Americans. But in the last 30 years, modern medicines have helped reduce the number of deaths by half. New medicines are also helping to keep more patients out of the hospital by controlling high-risk conditions that lead to heart disease, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Pharmaceutical company researchers are working hard to discover breakthroughs that will help make many illnesses and diseases a thing of the past and bring more patients new hope for a better tomorrow. So, more people like Charles can get on with living and go on with the show.

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THE WEEK

■ Gore accuses Bush of clinging to a "Cold War mindset." Of course, a lot of Democrats opposed this mindset *during* the Cold War.

■ First Netscape merged with AOL. Then AOL merged with Time Warner. What next? A Netscape/AOL/Time Warner merger with the Justice Department?

■ Six weeks after Super Tuesday, polls show Gov. Bush recovering nicely from the primaries. A recent roundup of state polls shows Bush leading Gore in 27 states worth 308 electoral votes, well over the 270 needed to win. Last month's national survey of likely voters by American Viewpoint found Bush leading Gore 44 percent to 37 percent, with a 13-point lead among men and a 2-point lead among women. Bush is also ahead among seniors (by 6 points), ticket-splitters (8 points), Catholics (11 points), and investors (9 points). In April 1996, by comparison, the doomed Bob Dole trailed Bill Clinton by almost 20 points among women, ticket-splitters, and Catholics. Asked whether they would rather restore honesty and integrity to the White House by electing Bush, or stay the course of peace and prosperity with Gore, voters chose the former by a 9-point margin. None of this means Bush will win. But that Bush *can* win there should be no doubt.

■ John McCain completed a flip-flop-flip on the Confederate flag, calling for it to come down from the South Carolina state capitol when he finally landed upright. Give him a 10 for execution and a 0 for difficulty. McCain declared that his latest, and presumably final, position would open him to criticism from all quarters, to predictably universal plaudits from the press. Meanwhile, in between rounds of bitching about his treatment from Bush, McCain traveled (yet again) to Vietnam, where he (yet again) basked in the media spotlight. As Emerson once put it: "Every hero becomes a bore at last."

■ With Bush set to unveil his ideas on free-market reform of Social Security, Al Gore has already started blasting reform as—you guessed it—a "risky scheme." The recent stock-market volatility may indeed increase people's fears about relying on private investment to fund their retirements. Bush should preempt that criticism by pointing out that most of the new investors are in the markets for the long term and that over the long term, the stock market has consistently offered a good return. The fact that the new investors have not panicked—have instead, by and large, seen market declines as buying opportunities—shows that the public's financial sophistication is growing and that individuals can be trusted to manage their money. It is an argument *for* personal Social Security accounts, not against them. Bush can also promise that any reform will let people have a choice whether to invest or to stay in the old system, and that there will be a safety net. Furthermore, Bush must set the manageable risks of private investment against the certainty of an abysmal return from an unreformed Social Security system. Gore argues that the money Bush would use to fund the transition to an improved system should instead be used to pay down debt. But that's a false choice. Increased private investment (and, Bush should add, increased growth resulting from lower taxes) will mean that we will have more assets in the future which we can use to handle any outstanding debts. Bush can win this argument and rally the new investors to his side. The election may turn on whether he does.

■ Democratic senator Evan Bayh of Indiana is touted by some as an ideal running mate for Gore—a young moderate from a heartland state that normally leans Republican. But he may have a fatal flaw: Bayh voted for the partial-birth-abortion ban last fall. National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com) asked Patricia Ireland of the National Organization for Women about the consequences of Gore's putting him on the ticket. "It would cause a great deal of concern about his commitment to abortion rights. Among our activists, there would be a decided lack of interest in campaigning for him and getting out the vote," she said. It looks like the former Indiana governor may be another fatality of the Democrats' pro-abortion extremism. What was that about "tolerance" and "litmus tests" again?

■ New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani has been getting the sympathy he deserves for his prostate cancer. He also deserves thanks for announcing it so forthrightly (the contrast with the evasions of the late Sen. Paul Tsongas is painful). Preliminary reports suggest that the cancer has been caught early and may well prove no obstacle to Giuliani's candidacy. It is still an open question whether another Republican would run a better race against Mrs. Clinton. Giuliani mobilizes the Democratic base, especially blacks; he will lose some pro-life votes for supporting partial-birth abortion; and his appeal to fence-sitting liberals may have been compromised by the shooting of Patrick Dorismond. There are two tantalizing possibilities, if Giuliani drops out. Putting Gov. George Pataki in the

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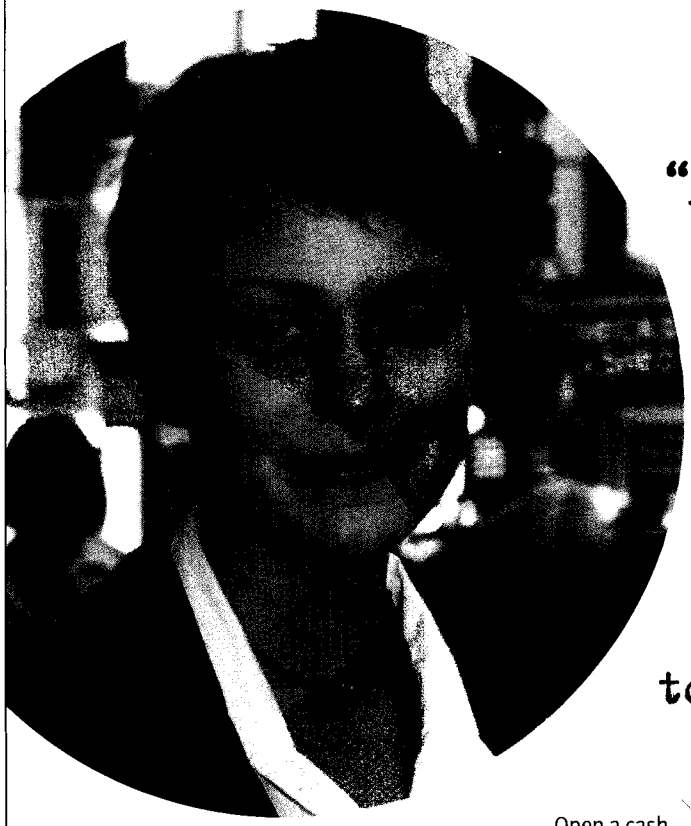

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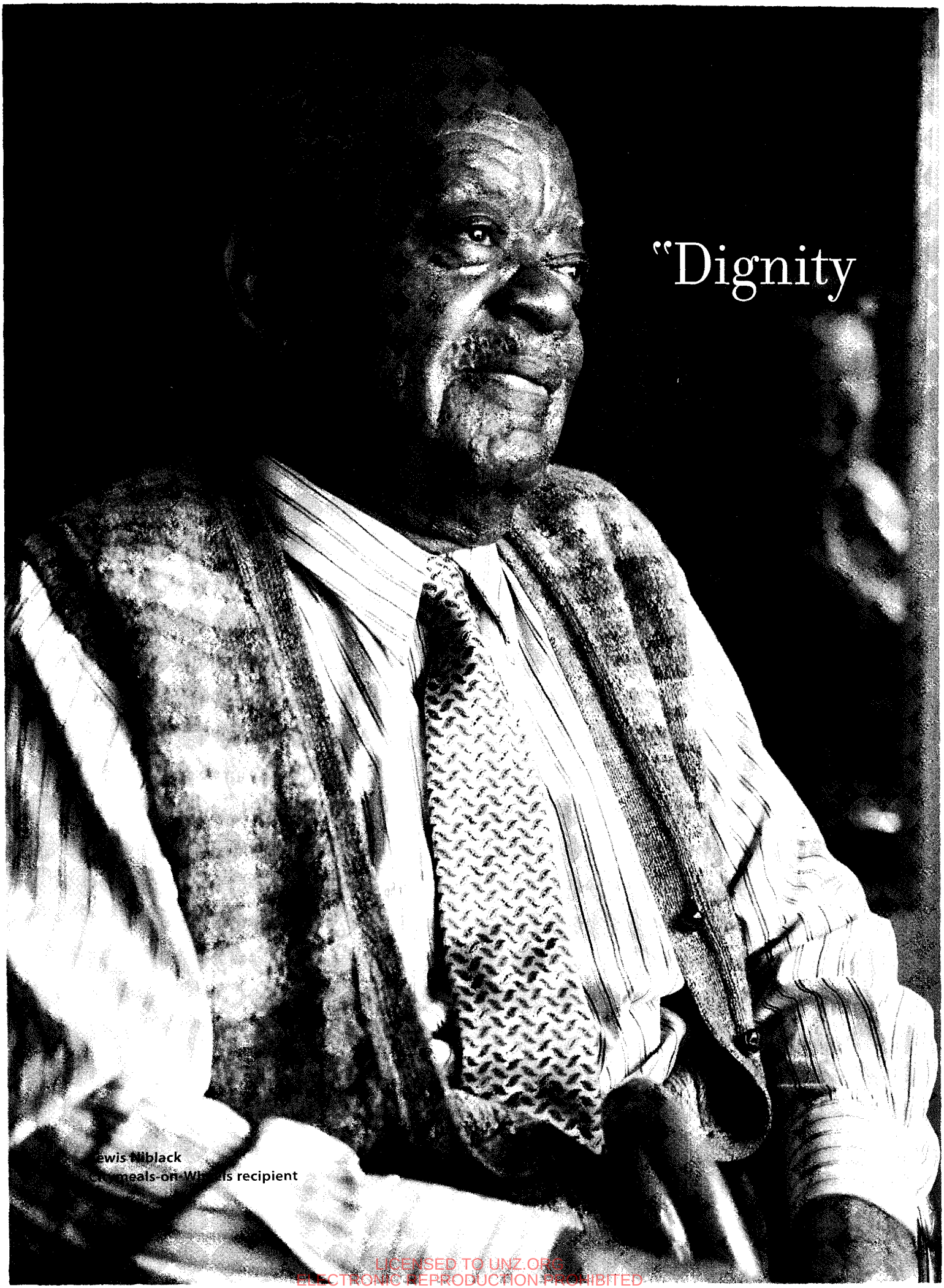

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Senate would get him out of Albany, where he has done an awful job, and allow Giuliani to run in 2002 for governor, a post for which (unlike senator) he is actually suited. And then there is Peggy Noonan, who wrote the book on Mrs. Clinton (literally) and, unlike her, is a native New Yorker.

■ A 16-year-old thug shot seven kids between the ages of 11 and 16 at the National Zoo in Washington the day after Easter. The *Washington Post* called it "horrifying but, in a country that lets its handguns do the talking, sadly unsurprising." But the United States is not a country that "lets its handguns do the talking." It is a country that lets states and localities set their own gun-control policies. The District of Columbia, taking advantage of this freedom, has some of the most Draconian gun-control laws in the nation. That didn't prevent the zoo shootings, or the 228 homicides (many of them with guns) in 1999. And if guns were made as illegal throughout the country as drugs are now, would they be any less available to the criminally vicious? The *Washington Post* should pay more attention to incompetent local policing, incompetent local politicians, and the city's debased underclass culture; less to rewriting the Constitution.

■ The Supreme Court is set to rule on the constitutionality of state laws banning partial-birth abortion. From the tenor of the questions the justices asked during oral argument, it seems likely that the Court will find a constitutional right to commit this enormity. If it so rules, the Court will have gone further even than it did in *Roe* v. *Wade*, which struck down a Texas abortion statute but did not say anything about its provision on partial-birth abortion. It will also demonstrate that the Court's implicit promise in 1992's *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*—that it would compromise on abortion rights by accepting moderate restrictions—was empty. Indeed, it would shatter the illusion that this is a moderate Court. Bans on partial-birth abortion have been passed by 31 states and overwhelming, bipartisan majorities of the House and Senate. If the Court issues a radical ruling, the instinctive response of pro-life politicians will be to mumble something about the necessity of respecting its decision. They should say, rather, that the Court got it wrong—and that they will work to correct it. Gov. Bush, take note.

■ The Court also considered whether the Boy Scouts should be allowed to prevent open homosexuals from being scoutmasters. The Scouts' policy is widely held to be irrational. But does anyone think it irrational to keep young heterosexual men from supervising teenage girls on camping trips? Besides, as a private organization, the Scouts are presumptively allowed to set their own standards. The gay-rights litigators from the Lambda Legal Defense Fund countered that the Scouts, as a large and important institution, must be regulated as a quasi-governmental entity—a premise that threatens the very idea of a vibrant civil society distinct from the state. They argued, as well, that the Scouts' principles and mission do not necessarily preclude gay scoutmasters. If freedom of association is to prevail, however, the Scouts must be free to decide for themselves how best to put their principles into practice. They should not have to defer to the judgments of the Lambda Legal Defense Fund, or of the Supreme Court.

■ Vermont's legislature passed, and its governor signed, a bill to let homosexuals enter "civil unions." Call it Gay Marriage Lite. But civil unions might soon morph into gay marriage, period. The legislature was acting in response to the state supreme court, which had ruled that Vermont had to establish either gay marriage or something functionally equivalent. The litigators have vowed to press on for the real thing, making the surely correct point that to be equivalent, civil unions have to be portable: If you're married in Vermont, you're married when you go to Kansas, too. The state supreme court could very well say that Vermont has to go as far as it can to ensure portability, by upgrading civil unions to marriages. Then a same-sex couple in Vermont could get married, go to another state, and demand recognition as a married couple. The federal Defense of Marriage Act was passed in 1996 precisely to prevent this strategy from working: It allows states not to recognize other states' same-sex marriages. But the couple would be able to challenge this law and, given the composition of the federal courts, might well win. In which case marriage would have been radically, and undemocratically, redefined, not just in Vermont but in all 50 states.

■ Hawaii joined Alaska, Arizona, California, Maine, Nevada, Oregon, Washington State, and the District of Columbia in legalizing medical marijuana (although the federal prohibition remains in force). Hawaii's approval, however, came through the legislature, not—as it has everywhere else—through the referendum process. Popular sentiment has always supported common sense on this question; maybe now the political class is catching on too. Among the grossnesses of the Clinton years that we will soon be spared is the spectacle of a war on drugs led by politicians who "didn't inhale."

■ Late last year, wild winds ripped across France, destroying, among much else, some 10,000 trees at Versailles, many of which dated from the days of Marie-Antoinette. Inspired to action, students at the middle school in Fayetteville (named for the Marquis de Lafayette), Georgia, launched a successful drive to help, sending 5,000 young trees and 106 mature ones to Versailles. Most never got there. Upon arriving in port, 1,000 seedlings were found to lack the certificates required by EU regulations. Another 1,000 were in bud, also a no-no. Still another 1,000 belonged to inadmissible species. And so on. Three thousand trees went back to Fayetteville. Merci beaucoup, Brussels.

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■ One of the best editorial pages in the country belongs to the *Detroit News*. Tom Bray has edited that section since 1983, providing the intellectual justification for much of what reform-minded Republican governor John Engler has tried to accomplish, from tax cuts to welfare reform. But editor and publisher Mark Silverman has fired Bray, apparently for being too effective an advocate of conservatism. (Although Silverman has denied issuing a pink slip, in a farewell column Bray wrote, "I did not seek such a change.") Bray will now become a columnist for the *News*, and we hope his compelling voice will continue to resonate in Michigan and perhaps find the national audience it deserves. But his departure is a dark sign, as one of the few editorial pages to dissent from the liberal conventions of the major dailies loses the man who made it required reading.

■ Honest liberals are always worth listening to. Anne Roiphe, novelist and columnist for the *New York Observer*, recently gave a tour of her, and their, minds on the subject of vouchers. "What can you do," she asked, "with a [public-school] system that . . . allows rotten principals to pass their days in a bureaucratic haze, can't hire or fire teachers without a congressional act, and allows classrooms to grow so full that individual children languish with boredom . . . ?" What she did was send her three kids to private schools. Go to the head of the class, Mrs. Roiphe. But, she goes on, "I'm sentimentally attached to the way the public schools used to be. . . . You went to class. You learned to become an American, drew pictures of pumpkin pies, wrote Valentine cards, pledged allegiance." So? So, "why couldn't we have an equivalent of a Marshall Plan" for big-city public schools? Well, "we" could wait for a plan that won't come, because of unfireable principals and teachers, and politicians in hock to their unions. Or "we" could do what many of "us," including Anne Roiphe, have already done—get the hell out. Conservatives want to make it easier, with vouchers, which she doesn't like. Why can't she stay with her first thought? Maybe if she wrote it 500 times . . .

■ Swastikas, yes; crosses, no. Last fall, when the new academic year began at Columbine High School, officials of the school district announced that a permanent memorial to the slain students would be constructed inside the school. Parents of those who died were asked to contribute ceramic tiles of their own design to the memorial. The families of Daniel Rohrbough and Kelly Fleming submitted several tiles with religious themes. One tile had 13 crosses, one for each of the victims—12 students and a teacher—while another had a verse from the Bible. Unacceptable, said the school district, apparently fearing an ACLU lawsuit. The tiles were returned to the families, who now have a federal lawsuit of their own under way against the school district for having violated their rights. Brian Rohrbough points out that his son's killers, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, used to sport Nazi regalia in the school's hallways, apparently without attracting the attention of either the ACLU or the school authorities.

■ A black student at the University of Iowa's School of Dentistry has been arrested for e-mailing bomb threats full of racial invective against . . . other black students. She was trying to make it seem as though a "hate crime" had been perpetrated—a kind of hoax that has become commonplace. The object is the fabrication of a climate of "racism," which then can be exploited. Indeed, a woman named Ann Rhodes, the University of Iowa's vice president for university relations, called a press conference, saying that she had assumed the threats had come from "a white guy between the ages of 25 and 55" since "they're the root of most evil." No kidding, she actually said that. And she's still a vice president at Iowa. Later that day, she apologized. You can bet an apology would not have been enough to spring her if she had found the root of most evil to be among the groups infamously attacked by John Rocker.

■ On the weekend of April 15, students at the University of Albany, New York, planned a picnic to celebrate the anniversary of Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in baseball. They circulated fliers among the student body to advertise the event. Within days, the affirmative-action director of the student assembly (it goes without saying that no self-respecting student assembly is without an affirmative-action director nowadays) had received 40 complaints. It seems there is a widespread belief that "picnic" originated as a term for a lynching party—an occasion when white folk in the Old South would pick ("pic-") a Negro ("-nic") to lynch. This belief is entirely mistaken; the word is of 17th-century French origin and has nothing to do with lynching at all. That, of course, has not saved it; the fliers were reissued with the offending word removed. As we saw last year in Washington, D.C., with "niggardly," it is not the intent to give offense that matters, but the fact that offense is taken—by people who are ignorant, illiterate, and determined to find offense in all around them. Be careful with "necktie."

■ Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control issued a four-page study that concluded that a 20-cent tax increase per six-pack of beer could reduce U.S. gonorrhea rates by almost 9 percent. "Alcohol has been linked to risky sexual behavior among youth," explained Harrell Chesson, a health economist. "It influences a person's judgment, and they are more likely to have sex without a condom," etc. Well, that settles it. Our only question: Why not raise beer taxes by $5 and wipe out the scourge of gonorrhea once and for all?

■ May 1 was Communism's holy fiesta, and it still is in Europe. Violent demonstrations against "capitalism" were held in a dozen cities, including London, Berlin, and Zurich. The comrades came jet-setting from Seattle for a great day of red nostalgia. If you've got money—generated by "capitalism," of course—you can travel.

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■ A federal appeals court has ruled that Ohio's motto—"With God, all things are possible"—is unconstitutional. Maybe Ohio should borrow from Dostoyevsky: "With God, all things are possible. Without God, all things are permitted."

ELIÁN GONZÁLEZ

Honor Lost

It seemed for a moment that the Easter-weekend raid on Lázaro González's home might be a turning point in the story of Elián González—the picture of the submachine gun pointed at the crying six-year-old was a little rough, even for many who supported sending him back to Cuba. But time passed, attention flagged; the raid is being referred to as a "rescue." All that remains is to sweep up the pieces, and save those that are instructive.

The hatred directed at Miami's Cuban Americans was striking. On the face of it, they should be a cherished part of the gorgeous mosaic. Their skins are not WASP white; they speak another language. They are immigrants, at a time when people are encouraged to come here for any reason, or none; some of them practice irredentist politics. The difference is Communism. The Cuban Americans left a state that was part of an international revolutionary enterprise and that continues, even after the enterprise has collapsed, to breathe hatred of the United States. Anyone who would leave such a place is defined as a malign being. Castro, it is conceded, may have made errors of execution, but refugees from his rule are presumed to have ungenerous hearts. The only thing an immigrant can do that is as bad as fleeing Communists is to have worked for the Nazis.

It is no surprise that the media lean left. It is moderately surprising that they have not complained about efforts to silence them during this affair. Gregory Craig, Juan Miguel González's lawyer, sent a pre-raid letter to television networks asking that they "refrain from broadcasting any . . . coverage" of the Elián bust. The networks declined to oblige, but also (with the exception of Fox) did not say that they had been asked. During the raid itself, an NBC camera crew was "kicked" and "roughed up," according to one cameraman. The Fourth Estate celebrated its complaisance one week later by yukking it up with Janet Reno's boss at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

Most disturbing is what the raid and the reaction to it suggests about the American government. We may be seeing the lineaments of something new—the Docile State.

The Docile State prefers administrative procedure to law. Throughout the Elián crisis, Sen. Moynihan and other members of the better-educated wing of the send-him-back majority repeated, like a prayer, that "the law is clear." It was: The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals had ruled that Elián's application for asylum, filed on his behalf by his Miami relatives, should be adjudicated. Congress had declined to act, by (for example) granting Elián citizenship or permanent-resident status. Against the judgment of one branch and the silence of another, Janet Reno asserted her own judgment that Elián's father loved him and that he should have possession of him, even while the dispute over asylum was pending. So in went the INS.

The formal agencies of the Docile State operate with the help of an ostensibly private para-state. Consider the pilot-fish who swam alongside Reno. Gregory Craig, whose salary is being paid by left-wing church groups, last surfaced as a lawyer for President Clinton during his impeachment. Irwin Redlener, the pediatrician who diagnosed Elián's Miami relatives at a distance of 1,100 miles as "psychologically abusive," has a long history of political flak-catching.

The Docile State, finally, expects docility of the people. So long as it gets it, they are flattered and cared for. When they object or become difficult, they are treated as enemies. Why else were antiterrorist break-and-enter techniques used on a family which had promised to surrender Elián, and which had no guns in the house? Why else were statues of the Virgin Mary gratuitously broken—was she guarding the closet door?

Garry Wills, who knows a lot of history and how to distort it, approvingly compared the show of force to Eisenhower's 1958 landing in Beirut, and to Washington's 1794 suppression of the Whiskey Rebellion. Prof. Wills does not pause to consider that Lebanon is a foreign country, and that Washington was dealing with armed rebels (it is not called the Whiskey Custody Fight). But difficult citizens of the Docile State are considered foreigners and rebels. *New York Times* columnist Thomas L. Friedman applauded the picture of the submachine gun at the closet door because it showed that the United States obeys "the rule of law." Yes, the law of a Docile State.

In the long view, we may be witnessing a tension in republican government. The republican ideal, as the Framers knew, had many problems: Ancient republics were small and turbulent. They hoped America's scale and diversity would compensate; so Hamilton and Madison wrote *Federalist* Numbers 9 and 10, and Washington spoke of the United States as a "rising empire." But the imperial remedy has its own tendency to excess.

Political scientists of the 22nd century will debate these fine points. Meanwhile, a tyrant won a victory, a boy lost freedom, and America lost honor.

DEFENSE

Don't START

Talk about being stuck in a Cold War mindset. The Clinton administration is entertaining the idea of enticing Russia to accept a small revision in the ABM treaty, by agreeing to (further) massive reductions in offensive

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weapons in a new START III treaty. This is arms-control negotiation straight out of an episode of *That '70s Show*. The contemplated deal would limit U.S. efforts to counter today's real nuclear threat—which emanates not from Moscow, but from places like Pyongyang and Tehran—to one site in Alaska, with 100 antiballistic missiles (enough only to counter a limited attack from North Korea). It would do so while preserving intact the ABM treaty, which arguably is legally defunct and in any case has lost whatever purpose it had with the end of superpower competition. Indeed, the Russian economy is now doing the arms-controllers' work for them. A country where life expectancy is falling toward Bangladeshi levels can ill afford to maintain an up-to-date nuclear arsenal—which is why Russia is currently junking top-of-the-line SS-18s.

So, START III would be as meaningless as . . . START II. The Russians have just got around to ratifying START II after seven years. Even now, the treaty is unlikely ever to come into force because Russia has made its ratification conditional on U.S. acceptance of the 1997 "demarcation" and "succession" agreements between Moscow and Washington on the ABM treaty. The demarcation agreement would expand the treaty by prohibiting space-based theater missile defense; currently the treaty deals only with wider-ranging national missile defense. The succession agreement would make not just Russia, but also Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan officially the treaty's successors to the Soviet Union; if you liked one balky negotiating "partner," how about four! Since both agreements serve only to expand and further complicate the ABM treaty, they will deservedly be stuffed forever into some Senate Foreign Relations Committee broom closet.

Not that it matters. The flurry of Russian arms-control action is propaganda, aimed, like the 1980s campaign against the Pershing IIs, at America's allies and the appeasers in our midst, including those in the Old Executive Office Building. One reason there will probably be no revision of the ABM treaty anytime soon is that the Russians don't believe the administration is serious about missile defense. A reasonable conclusion, given that Clinton and his men are making every effort to evade the Cochran-Inouye law requiring deployment as soon as technologically feasible. That time is now, since the hit-to-kill technology that skeptics still call "impossible" has proven successful in six out of seven recent tests. (When two objects collide at a combined speed of 15,000 mph, 140 miles above the earth, it is no accident.) But the administration is stalling, hoping for anything to bail it out. A new Congressional Budget Office study heartened skeptics by estimating that a limited system would cost a daunting $60 billion. The methodology was dubious—for instance, the study included the full cost of satellites that would not be devoted exclusively to missile defense—but the proper response is: So what?

The value of defending Los Angeles should be, as they say in the MasterCard commercials, priceless.

THE MICROSOFT CASE

Not Solomonic but Stupid

MERE rumors of the Justice Department's proposed remedies for Microsoft's allegedly monopolistic behavior were enough to send the financial markets into a swoon, one that affected even some of the company's competitors who had been cheering on the government. Never ones to let evidence from working free markets unduly influence them, the antitrust enforcers have gone ahead with their plan to break up Microsoft. If they prevail, the company will be replaced by two offspring: one will sell the Windows operating system, the other will sell all the Microsoft applications and Internet products that run on the system.

The theory here is that there has been an "applications barrier" to competition: Not enough people have been buying operating systems other than Windows, because they want to use Microsoft's applications (such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel). A half-Microsoft that made applications alone would have to supply them to the other operating systems, which could then take on Windows. And once Microsoft was split, each company could be left to make its way without further regulatory supervision.

The government's theory, however, misunderstands both the past and present state of Microsoft's competition. The reason the operating systems peddled by IBM and Apple did not succeed had much less to do with any "applications barrier" than with the fact that they were far more expensive than Windows. (Not that Apple's subsequent success means anything to the enforcers: They have arbitrarily excluded Apple from their definition of the relevant market.) There is plenty of software developed for other operating systems. Often, Microsoft's products either work on those systems or can be made to work without much expense. Services that once required software, meanwhile, can now be procured over the Internet.

Tinkering with markets it does not understand, ignoring the competition before its eyes in favor of an industry of its own imaginings, the Justice Department is poised to do real harm to the economy. This case should be abandoned before it wipes out still more billions of dollars of Americans' wealth.

VIETNAM

In the Ruins

ADAM SMITH said there is a lot of ruin in a nation—meaning, that a country can make many mistakes and still plow along. The Vietnam War showed there was a lot of ruin in the United States. The war, which ended with the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, produced acrid politics and campus unrest; Kent State and Watergate. It stroked the self-esteem of a generation of smug shirkers, led by draft-deserter and presi-

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dent Bill Clinton. It left 58,000 better men in the grave. But the United States eventually recovered itself and went on to victory in the Cold War and a two-decade boom.

There was less capacity to bear ruin in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Cambodia was subjected to a genocide run by lunatics, which it even now deals with only by nervous jokes and denial. Laos is an isolation ward, as remote from the outside world as a sealed tomb. Vietnam put 400,000 people in "reeducation" camps, where 50,000 of them died. More thousands took to the South China Sea. Little Saigons sprang up in Orange County, Arlington, Va., Louisiana (lose a country, gain a restaurant). The East Asian economic liftoff passed the country by (fewer than half of Vietnamese city-dwellers own even scooters—this, on a continent that floods America with cars). With its swallows and its charm, Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, is a pleasant backwater of the last century.

The worst thing about Southeast Asia's condition is that it is so needless. Whether free or colonial, the region does not have a history of particularly awful governance. What brought it to its present pass was Communism—the ideology that is alien wherever it establishes itself, which sets itself against peace, reason, and nature. The United States made many errors in fighting it; not in picking our enemy.

Our Vietnam funk gone, many Americans (including the Clintons among us) are comfortable flexing America's muscles. We want to make Haitians vote, Somalis eat, and the Albanian lie down with the Serb. If we learn from Vietnam to fight those who mean their people and us only evil, and, when we fight them, to do our best to win, the experience may not have been mere ruin.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Bill: I am sorry to say that my mother, Elizabeth Brookhiser, died on April 10.

She was 79 years old. She was born in Johnstown, New York; went to Mount Holyoke; married my father in 1942. Her main instrument was the piano; because she wanted to be in the high-school orchestra and band, she picked up the violin and the saxophone; she learned the organ in college, and the accordion in her thirties, to teach it to my brother. She also sang in the college choir (alto).

She was a great fan of NATIONAL REVIEW, lilacs, and her husband and sons. My first literary experience was hearing her read Rudyard Kipling's "The Elephant's Child," which is set (I don't have to look it up, the words being lodged in my memory) on "the great gray-green greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever-trees."

When I was showing my wife some old family pictures and pointed out my father's stylish black and white shoes, Jeanne said, with the clarity of someone looking for the first time, "Yes, Rick, but your mother was beautiful."

So she was.

Rick

Dear Rick: The house is unanimous on the point. And extends deep condolences.

Bill

■ Memo to: Bill
From: Ed [Capano]

I think our readers will be interested in this news item. You can console everybody by reminding them that this week you publish *Let Us Talk of Many Things: The Collected Speeches*. Rich tells me we have a fine review from Aram Bakshian Jr.

"AP, April 12, Fort Wayne, Ind.—Conservative author and analyst William F. Buckley Jr. says he's given his last speech.

"Buckley, who ended his political talk show in December, told 700 Republicans at Tuesday night's Allen County Lincoln Day dinner they were hearing his last public address.

"'Let me begin my final comments with a reference of zero historical importance to you but of some historical importance to me, which is that tonight's speech is my final speech in my career as a public speaker, which began about 50 years ago,' said Buckley, 74.

"'After tonight's engagement, I will accept zero engagements for public speaking except to speak at my granddaughter's wedding.'

"The audience gave him thunderous applause and a standing ovation. Buckley declined to discuss his decision following the speech."

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I write concerning two of your recent columns in NATIONAL REVIEW.

You spoke several times of the Confederate flag and once of the Stars and Bars, when referencing the flag flying over the statehouse in Columbia, S.C.

The flag that flies over the capitol is the Battle Flag. This flag is red, with a blue St. Andrew's Cross, and 13 white stars upon the cross. I believe the flag over the capitol is rectangular in shape, while the Battle Flag carried by the Rebels in combat was square.

But the point of my letter is that this Battle Flag was carried into battle by southern soldiers, of whom, I believe, some 95 percent owned no slaves. And the supreme commander of the Army in which most South Carolinians fought—Gen. Robert E. Lee—owned no slaves. The Battle Flag symbolizes the courage of those hundreds of thousands who bravely faced death in support of their belief that they should oppose aggression and invasion by "foreign" forces.

The national flag—the Stars and Bars—was officially adopted by the Confederate Congress in 1861 and was redesigned two more times before the end of the Confederacy.

Most sincerely, and in all good humor,

James Madison Barr
Hot Springs Village, Ark.

—WFB

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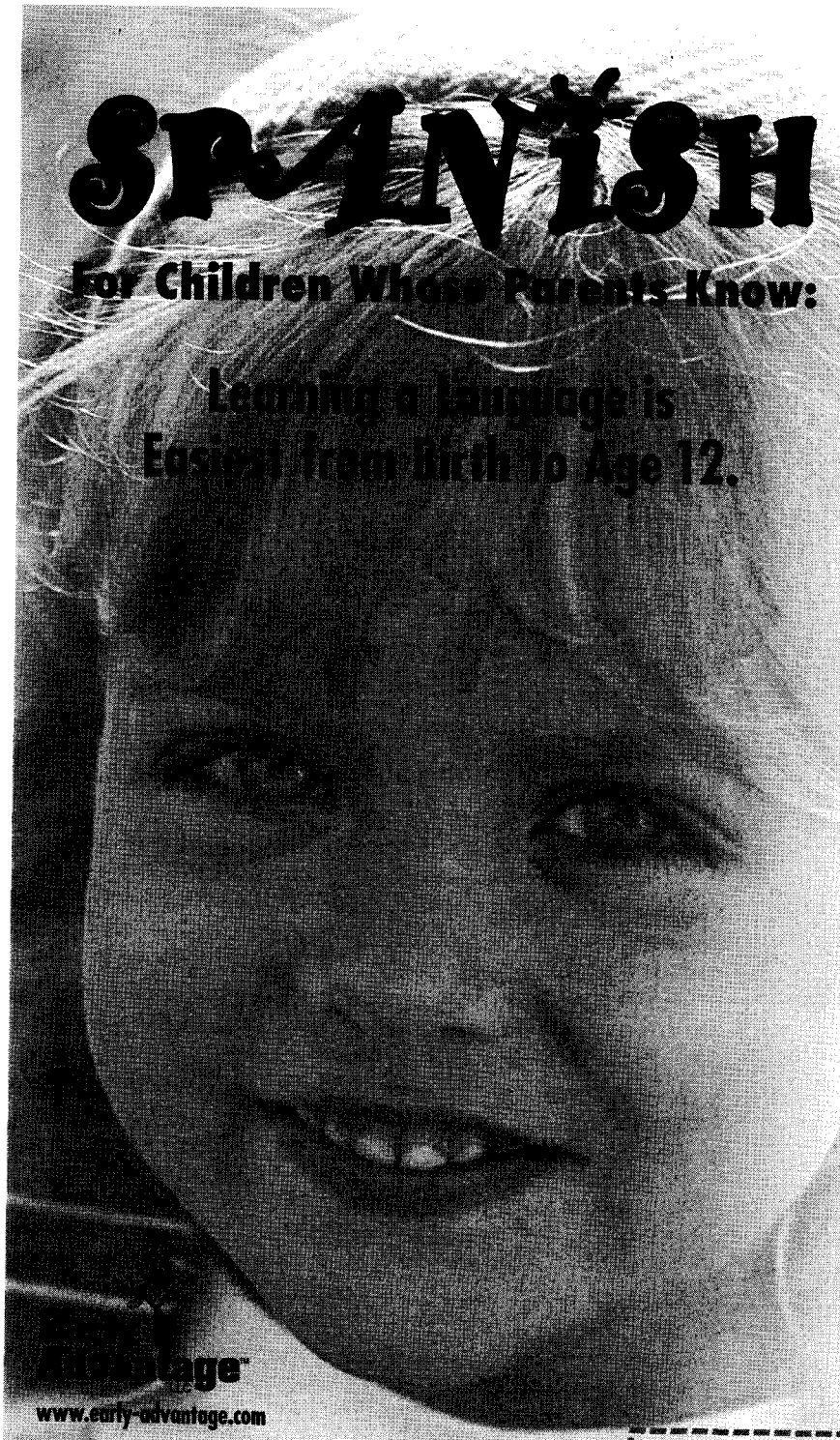

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■ ELIÁN ■

'Storm Troopers' Who Cry

The reign of sentimentality

RAMESH PONNURU

THE Clinton administration and its allies like to depict the controversy over Elián González as a conflict between reason and emotion. The cool, dispassionate workings of the law, they say, should not be disrupted by a mob of Castro-hating Cuban-American hotheads. And it is obviously true that the González family in Miami has sometimes let its emotions cloud its judgments—although it would be nice if its critics would acknowledge that those emotions include love and concern for the child as well as (justified) hatred of Castro.

It is true, as well, that the conservatives in Washington who have taken up Little Havana's cause can reasonably be charged with sentimentality. Some of them have treated a six-year-old's expressed wishes about where he should be raised as authoritative. One wonders, also, whether a pimply teenager would have inspired the same devotion that the undeniably cute Elián has. The administration, then, would seem to have a point when it suggests that the people who want Elián to stay in America have lost sight of the proper impersonality of the rule of law.

And yet, and yet. There is also a flood of images that belie the self-presentation of the send-him-back crowd. The INS agents who broke down the González family's door broke down when they handed Elián over to his father. If these are "storm troopers," as the hotheads have said, they are storm troopers who cry. Janet Reno, too, wept during the raid. Dan Rather, a de facto press secretary for Reno, asked Juan Miguel González whether he had cried watching the video of his son asking to stay in America. And Rather himself teared up while contemplating the reunion of father and son. These tribunes of reason are quite a weepy bunch. No doubt if Greg Craig has tear ducts, they've gotten a good workout too.

By Roman Genn

It is hard to picture, say, J. Edgar Hoover needing to reach for the Kleenex after ordering a deadly assault—let alone an assault where no shots were fired. It is tempting to conclude that the change is a reflection of a feminized America. But it might be better to use less loaded language and say that the entire debate over Elián has unfolded in an America whose sensibility is softening.

This softness manifests itself, above all, in sentimentality. Sentimentality is a kind of willful self-deception. Our culture is so sunk in it that it hardly even knows it is lying to itself by refusing to regard sentimentality as a vice at all. Our culture is also increasingly uncomfortable with crisp logic, stark choices, and hard realities. Given a choice between removing a president and leaving him untouched, it will seek censure—a basically meaningless act. Even more, it will want to "move on" from unpleasant thoughts. It is impatient with politics, with the demands of public life.

It is, unsurprisingly, a culture that makes a fetish of compassion. As C. S. Lewis remarks in *The Screwtape Letters*, every age indulges its characteristic vices by exalting the virtues nearest to them. We may think it is compassion that moves us to want to save a distant people from slaughter; but it is sentimentality that tells us we can secure that objective without risk or sacrifice. When we thus delude ourselves about our motivations, we can be capable of extraordinary callousness. We may, with a mad mercy, drop bombs on the objects of our charity.

The softness of contemporary America has affected both sides of the debate over Elián. But it seems to have worked to the overall benefit of the send-him-back side. The parallel to the impeachment debate may be instructive. In each case, the public's conservative instincts led it to conclusions opposite those of most conservatives. A concern for stability made people worry about removing the president; a concern for public decency made them long for an end to the Lewinsky chatter. In the González case, the public's pro-family and pro-law-enforcement instincts are arrayed against conservatives.

In both cases, however, the public also had less flattering reasons to hold its opinion. People are bored with Elián, as they were with the Lewinsky scandal. They are eager to flip the channel. Never mind that flipping the channel might mean allowing presidential lawlessness or destroying a boy's future. The public has no tolerance for "partisan bickering"—i.e., congressional oversight of executive agencies. This may sound like a pretty damning indictment of the public. And so it is. But even more blame should attach to those influential Americans, from Hollywood to Washington, who have done so much to make politics a dirty word.

How many times in the last few months have we heard that family ties ought to matter more than a "mere" difference in political systems? One might have thought that Reno was trying to send Elián to a monarchy, perhaps Denmark. With the Cold War over, most Americans find it hard to conceive of what totalitarianism is. It doesn't help that most of the

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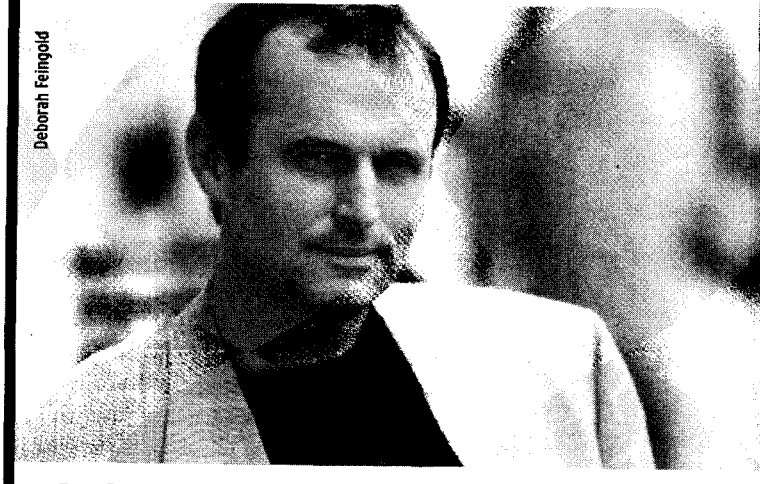
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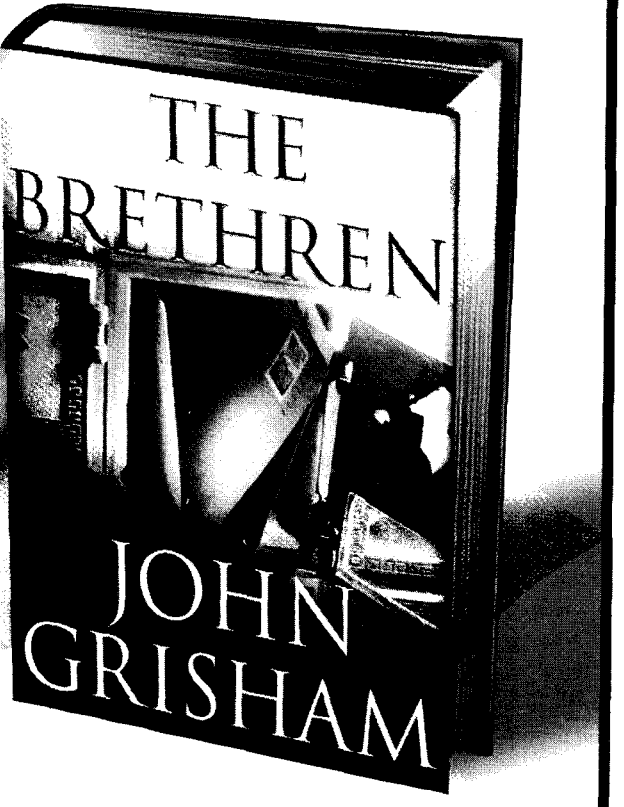

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repression takes place off-camera. What coverage of Cuba there has been during the Elián controversy has either interviewed the man on the street as though he could speak his mind fearlessly or, worse, romanticized the poverty in which Castro has kept the island.

The Clinton-Reno rhetoric about the "rule of law" has also lulled Americans into torpor. The administration applies the phrase to its own discretionary acts. For example, the Gonzálezes had no legal obligation to deliver Elián anywhere; they had only to be willing, as they said they were, to turn him over if INS officials came for him. They were in violation of no law—only Reno's wishes. Yet the administration said it had no choice but to raid their house because the rule of law was at stake. The rule of law is based on the concepts of moral agency and responsibility. As used by Clinton and Reno, however, the phrase "the rule of law" is a denial of both. Americans are not inclined to insist on accountability, since that would require looking more closely at the matter.

It is enough, for a sentimental country, that the administration's intentions are pure. And purity of intentions, particularly concerning children, is something this administration is a proven master at faking. At every step of this drama, we have been invited to ponder how administration officials feel. Network anchors said that the standoff must be "tearing Reno up," given her deep concern for children; her deputy, Eric Holder, told us that he held her as she cried. Afterward, there was endless talk about the patient, compassionate attorney general. The INS agents who did the dirty work were also available to the press. They said they had never encountered such resistance before, citing the couch that had been placed against the door.

Let us hope this administration's mercy is never deployed against us. If that happens, we will be reassured that we are being pummeled and jailed for our own good. Our punishers may be psychiatrists, as Elián's are likely to be.

For now, though, the style of government licensed by our carelessness does not touch us. We send a child to suffer tyranny for his own good, and to get him off the evening news. Like Winston Smith, we weep and realize that we love Big Brother. **NR**

■ ELIÁN II ■

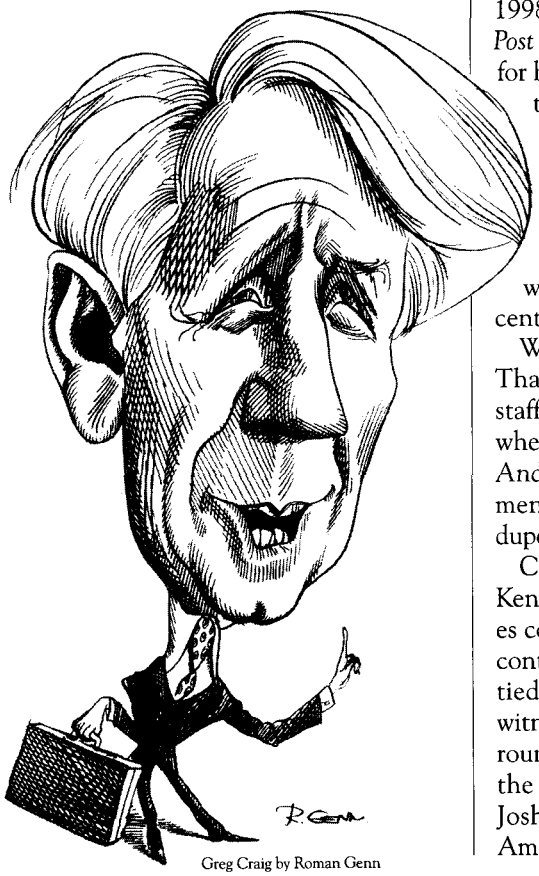
The 'Innocent'

Greg Craig, lawyer of the Left

JOHN J. MILLER

"ELIÁN is in an atmosphere that is psychologically abusive . . . He is in imminent danger to his physical as well as emotional and mental health," declared Gregory Craig, the lawyer for Elián González's father, during a *Nightline* appearance on April 19. A little more than two days later, Elián really *was* in imminent danger: Federal agents smashed in the door of his house and stuck a gun in his six-year-old face.

Within hours of the event, a credulous Craig was telling reporters that Elián wasn't "in any way terrorized, frightened, traumatized, or otherwise troubled" by the experience. What a remarkable transformation—from horrific abuse to utter serenity. In fact, said Craig, the wee lad was "a strong boy." It seems that he could withstand a nighttime raid of his home, but not the affections of his cousin, Marisleysis. (Craig is apparently laying the legal groundwork for lawsuits against the Miami family.)



Greg Craig by Roman Genn

Elián even took part in a tender scene with federal agents, said Craig. In a post-seizure CNN interview, the lawyer described a "very warm moment" between the boy and Janet Reno's big lugs: "I must say, there was a very touching moment in the room when the INS agents—the six-foot-two guys came in, 250 pounds came in . . . And they were saying goodbye, and they [were] saying how proud they had been to be able to reunite this family. And that's something. I mean, these are non-emotional, non-sentimental people." (Unlike, of course, those hysterical Cuban Americans.)

Greg Craig is many things—a high-powered D.C. lawyer, a Clinton intimate who led the president's impeachment defense, a silver-haired golden boy. But there's one thing he wants people to know above all: He's an innocent. In 1998, Craig slipped to the *Washington Post* a copy of a recommendation written for him as a part of his Harvard application. "This young man is Adam before the Fall," remarked his Exeter history teacher. Craig, reported the *Post*, acknowledged the description "with a chuckle." He commented about himself: "Still wide-eyed, still idealistic, still innocent."

Wide-eyed, idealistic, and innocent. That's roughly what GOP Senate staffers thought of Craig in the 1980s, when he was an aide to Ted Kennedy. And they didn't mean it as a compliment. In fact, they thought he was a dupe.

Craig orchestrated a 1984 hearing for Kennedy on alleged human-rights abuses committed by Nicaragua's rebels, the contras. He worked with groups closely tied to the Sandinista regime to find witnesses for the forum, which led to a round of anti-contra news coverage in the U.S. Soon afterward, however, Joshua Muravchik, currently of the American Enterprise Institute, exposed

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a fraud: The most compelling witnesses—three Miskito Indians—had been served up by the Sandinistas.

And a fourth participant, Father Alfredo Gundrum, an American priest living in Nicaragua, had been asked to play the role of honest broker—to place the testimony "into some kind of perspective," as Kennedy put it. Gundrum, described as "totally apolitical" in background material distributed by Kennedy's staff, told of how the contras launched vicious raids on Indian villages "almost every day." Yet Gundrum had been the subject of a San Francisco newspaper article just one month before the hearing. He was photographed standing before his church with a Soviet-made rifle in his hands and quoted as saying, "To me it was a day of grace the day the Sandinistas took over, and I really mean it."

After Muravchik's report ran in *The New Republic*, Craig gave the author a call. "He was very embarrassed by the whole thing," says Muravchik. "I was persuaded that he didn't know this was a put-up job."

And then came repentance, of a sort. Craig flew to Nicaragua on a bipartisan fact-finding mission that included an investigation into some of the claims made at the hearing he had staged. "He was shocked by some of what he saw—shallow graves and torture chambers run by the Sandinistas," says Joel Lisker, a Republican Senate staffer on the trip. Craig wound up contributing to a report that acknowledged the Sandinistas' "insensitive and inhumane" treatment of Nicaraguan Indians.

The 55-year-old Craig first made a name for himself as an antiwar protester at Harvard, where his statements frequently made their way into the press. Later, at Yale Law School, he got to know a woman named Hillary Rodham, and then her boyfriend, Bill Clinton. They weren't close, but when Craig graduated he turned over his apartment to the future First Couple, who lived together before marrying. "If you had asked our classmates which of us would become president, most of them would have picked Greg before Clinton," says Michael Medved, who was a pal of Craig's at Yale.

Craig did have an early brush with the presidency, albeit a creepy one. In the early 1980s, he was an attorney for John Hinckley, the man who shot President Reagan and three others. Craig helped put together an insanity defense that led to Hinckley's acquittal. Nine years later, he advised Ted Kennedy in the Palm Beach rape case involving the senator and his nephew, William Kennedy Smith.

But Craig's real moment in the sun, before Elián, came in 1998, when Clinton tapped him to fend off impeachment. "It is shocking, and it's terribly wrong what he did," Craig said of Clinton. But the president certainly wasn't a perjurer. After the Senate refused to boot Clinton, Craig won plenty of credit as savior.

He then returned to his old perch at Williams & Connolly, the well-heeled Washington law firm. When Cuba's allies started casting around for a lawyer to represent Elián's father, Democratic senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont urged Joan Brown Campbell, formerly of the National Council of Churches, to pick Craig. Leahy not only saw Craig in action at Clinton's Senate trial, but also knew his father, who once ran for governor of Vermont.

The deal was done. An arm of the United Methodist Church says it's about halfway to raising $100,000 for Craig's fees. That's probably money well spent, from the Left's perspective. Accounts of pre-raid negotiations between Elián's Miami relatives and the Justice Department suggest that Reno wasn't trying to bring peace to the warring González family so much as taking orders straight from Craig. It appears that the Miami Gonzálezes had agreed to transfer custody of Elián to his father, as long as they could live with the boy and his father in an environment free of U.S. and Cuban officials. These negotiations dragged on through Good Friday and into the next morning, with Craig reviewing documents in his office past 2:00 A.M.—and ultimately vetoing the proposed settlement.

For weeks he'd been saying that the government should grab Elián from his relatives "immediately." That night, Craig got his wish. He would later tell the *New York Times*, "We were, as far as I can tell, never close to an agreement." That's an odd claim following a sleepless night of negotiations. The Justice Department was on the phone to the González house in Miami at the very moment its agents burst in.

Since then, Craig has been all smiles. But throughout his public life—Harvard antiwar protester, Hinckley defender, Sandinista collaborator, Palm Beach rape-trial adviser, anti-impeachment ringmaster, and now counsel to Fidel Castro—there's one thing Craig has never been: innocent. **NR**

■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

Investor Class Act

Bush guns for a new constituency

RICHARD NADLER

GEORGE W. BUSH has belatedly proposed something his campaign desperately needed: an investor-class strategy. In formulating a policy on how to spur capital formation among the poor, he has created an incentive plan that shows how we could cut taxes and boost investment among all Americans.

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In his 1999 State of the Union address, Clinton proposed a substantial budgetary commitment to USAs—11

Mr. Nadler is chairman of the Republican Ideas Political Committee.

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- Filegate: the illegal procurement of over 1,000 FBI files of her political opponents.
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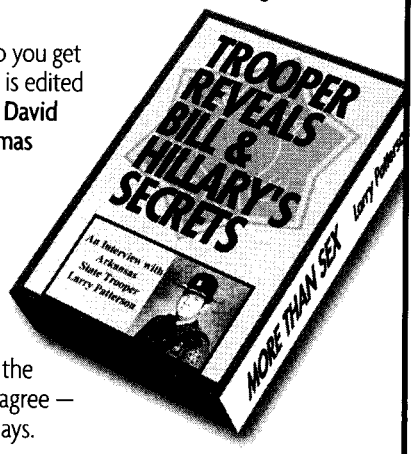
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percent of the budget surplus over 15 years. Gore pledged allegiance to the idea, but the specifics never materialized; Democrats on the House Budget Committee gutted the proposal. Subsequent statements by the Gore campaign reflect a diminished commitment. "Al Gore recognizes that the size of USA Accounts will need to be modified to make room for the other key tax-cut proposals he is announcing," states his website.

Gore's retreat from investor tax cuts reflects a fact of life: Investment credits are a tough sell in the Democratic party.

The situation within the Bush camp was more complex. Republicans have advanced a broad range of capital-friendly policies, including Social Security privatization, tax breaks for savers and investors, tax-advantaged accounts for education and health care, and lower levies on capital gains. The Bush campaign made an early strategic decision to design a tax plan that satisfied core Republican constituencies while wooing Democrats. Thus, the governor's plan included tax cuts for private-school parents, deductions for patrons of faith-based charities, and lower marginal rates; it also exempted several million more low-income earners from the tax rolls, and steepened the overall progressivity of the tax code.

This plan was not targeted to the swelling, volatile ranks of investors. Most of the investor-friendly features of last year's Republican tax bill were excluded. Capital-gains taxes were left uncut and unindexed. Tax breaks for popular retirement-savings plans, such as IRAs and 401(k)s, were not broadened.

Yet from the beginning of his campaign, Bush has staunchly advocated the linchpin of a pro-investment agenda: the partial privatization of Social Security. Beyond a pro forma pledge that no retiree or near-retiree will suffer diminished benefits, Bush has insisted that he will oppose Social Security tax increases; oppose government investment in private securities; and add a private, market-based component to retirement security through "personal retirement accounts."

The November election will test whether the experience of 80 million American stockholders has altered the calculus of Social Security politics. Recent polls show two-thirds of Americans supporting a diversion of some payroll-tax contributions to personally owned, privately managed accounts.

In a speech on April 11, Bush discussed savings and investment as part of his "New Prosperity Initiative" for the poor. He proposed Individual Development Accounts for 1.3 million individuals earning less than 60 percent of median income. Income-qualified people saving up to $300 per year would receive a dollar-for-dollar match from a combination of sources. The federal government would provide a 50 percent tax credit to financial institutions for every dollar those institutions matched in an Individual Development Account.

■

The election will test whether the experience of 80 million American stockholders has altered the calculus of Social Security politics.

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At first glance, it looks as though Bush has underfunded his program: No bank will trade a $300 gift to a poor person for a $150 tax credit. But the story doesn't end there. Banks and welfare groups will undoubtedly lobby for additional tax credits for this program from states and localities. The argument for legislatures will be simple: For $150, you can help a voter set up a $600 account (since another $150 will come from the feds, and the account holder will put up $300 himself).

The social object of this program is to induce poor people to save $600 per year for long-term goals. Under Bush's proposal, participants can withdraw these funds tax-free—to spend on a first home, a new business, or an educational expense. For other, short-term purposes, they would not be allowed to use the matching funds, but only their own deposits (and they would have to pay taxes on the withdrawal).

In effect, the program is a universal IRA for low-income workers. Will it work? It already does: The landmark welfare reform of 1996 included a pilot program, and a study released in January evaluated 14 matched-savings projects. The study reports that 1,326 participants have contributed an average of $33 in savings per month, and that participants are making matched withdrawals for home purchase and repair, small-business investment, and education. The accounts have proven attractive to the working poor.

A majority (55 percent) of participants list home ownership as their primary savings goal. The Bush team obviously hopes to use the program to generate participants for its "American Dream Down Payment Fund," an income-qualified subsidy for home purchase. This, in turn, will generate support for Individual Development Accounts among banks and other mortgage lenders.

The Bush program is not without flaws. First, the measure's extreme "progressivity" excludes the bulk of W.'s potential voters: those who are long-term savers in the stock and bond markets.

Second, it is a mistake to exclude "retirement" from the untaxed uses of Individual Development Accounts. Early results from the demonstration projects indicate that the poor, given the option, will apply some of the funds toward retirement. The closer this program gets to a universal IRA, the more popular it will become.

By federal-budget standards, Gov. Bush's proposal to subsidize capital formation among the poor is trivial. It commits between one and two billion dollars of tax credits over a five-year period—out of an annual budget exceeding $1.8 trillion. Its importance is structural, not substantive. Bush has designed a federal tax cut to encourage state tax cuts. In so doing, he has created a model for how conservatives can transform the tax system—so that it favors investment in America's future, not in big government. If Bush stays focused on this idea in the campaign, it will help him greatly with the investor class; if he stays focused on it afterward, it will help him greatly as president. **NR**

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■ PUBLIC POLICY ■

Granny Goes North

The truth about Canada and prescription drugs

DAVID GRATZER & NEIL SEEMAN

How far will a person go to get a good deal on prescription drugs? Barbara Childress, a retired English professor from Ithaca, N.Y., is willing to go the extra mile—and across the border. In a Quebec pharmacy, she stocks up on Celebrex arthritis-pain pills, blood-pressure medication, and the estrogen-replacement medicine she calls her "old lady pills." The Celebrex alone is 40 percent cheaper than in her home state. The bus trip, which she and other seniors from her retirement home make regularly, saves her about $55 a month.

They aren't the only ones: *60 Minutes* and other media have reported on these day trips by seniors. Politicians are also paying attention. Maine's legislature has passed a bill mandating Canadian prices for pharmaceuticals, as has the Vermont senate. Though neither measure is expected to become law, politicians in some 14 other states contemplate similar action.

In Washington, three bills sit before Congress endorsing some form of price control. All the sponsors are Democrats, but at least one Republican isn't far behind. Sen. Slade Gorton of Washington state promises to introduce legislation to put pressure on drug companies, which he has characterized as the "new health-care villains."

But is Canada really a nirvana for cheap drugs? The price comparisons that make headlines in the *New York Times* are for patented, brand-name drugs like Celebrex. But if a patient needs, for example, penicillin for a strep throat, the story would be different. Penicillin is a generic, or nonpatented, drug—and these tend to be cheaper in the U.S.

That's significant, because 45 percent of prescriptions written in the U.S. are for generics. Crude price comparisons also fail to account fully for volume discounts and physicians' prescribing habits, which make the picture much more complex. Economists Patricia Danzon and Jeong Kim examined drug prices in several countries; by using certain variables, they could show that prices in Canada were 218 percent higher than in the U.S.—but if they used other variables, American prices appeared 171 percent higher than Canadian ones.

Danzon and Kim found that the aggregate price differences between prescription drugs in the U.S. and Canada actually favor the average American consumer, who would have paid 3 percent more in Canada for his yearly drug regimen. So Canada's drug market isn't quite the Price Club it's made out to be. Indeed, it shows the disaster price controls can wreak.

Starting in 1968, Canada was a haven for drug piracy. The Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau allowed anyone to produce and sell generic copies of brand-name prescription drugs in return for paying the patent-holder a fee equal to 4 percent of sales. Although the cheaper generic drugs slightly reduced the bill to consumers, Canada lost thousands of jobs and several billion dollars in drug development, as scientists shepherded their inventions to the U.S. for patent protection. By the late 1980s, Canadian companies spent just $70 million on drug development—a Third World level of spending.

In 1987, Canada finally restored patent protection for pharmaceuticals, but promptly introduced a "Review Board" to ensure that prices were "not excessive." The board's price guidelines are based on prices in other countries—all of which have price controls in place.

Canada is home to just a handful of generic-drug companies, and only about 60 publicly traded biotech companies. Foreign pharmaceutical companies are loath to invest. Canada thus hosts relatively little research; the vast majority of brand-name pharmaceutical companies flourish only in the U.S.

A vibrant pharmaceutical industry, however, is crucial to the continuing development of medicine. Consider that 30 years ago having a heart attack was a major disaster—a third of Americans would never walk out of the hospital. Today, the mortality rate approaches one in twenty. Part of the advance is due to new pharmaceutical agents like beta-blockers. The newest drug, t-PA, busts clots, thereby preventing major cardiac damage. It's not unheard of for an American to enter a hospital on Monday with a minor heart attack and, after t-PA, be back at work on Friday.

Such pharmaceutical revolutions are taking place in practically every aspect of medicine. Zoloft and Prozac free people from the labyrinth of depression. Antiviral cocktails make AIDS a chronic illness rather than a death sentence, for some patients.

Without market-driven drug prices, consumers are unable to reward those researchers who succeed in alleviating suffering, preventing disease, and preserving life. But the free market does this beautifully. While many new drugs are expensive, their prices accurately reflect the $24 billion that the U.S. pharmaceutical industry spent on research and development in the last year alone. A new medicine typically requires some $400 million of investment and 12 to 15 years to come to market. Drug companies need to recoup these research costs, as well as their investments in "blind alley" drugs that falter after years of study.

Jack Calfee of the American Enterprise Institute has asked: What would have happened if Congress had passed a law in 1988 dictating that all AIDS drugs be made available at "reasonable" prices, as determined by a politicized review board? A pharmaceutical breakthrough might have been lost. At the same time, health-care costs would have exploded—because, in the case of AIDS, for every $1 spent on prescription drugs there is a corresponding $4 decline in hospital-care costs.

Odds are, the present push for price controls will fail. It is possible, however, that such a measure will be implemented by stealth—perhaps through Gore's proposal to expand Medicare to cover prescription drugs.

Take it from a couple of Canadians: America should just say no. **NR**

Dr. Gratzer, a Canadian physician, is the author of *Code Blue: Reviving Canada's Health Care System*. Mr. Seeman, an editorial-board member of Canada's *National Post*, is the director of health policy for the Free Trade Medical Network Inc. in Toronto.

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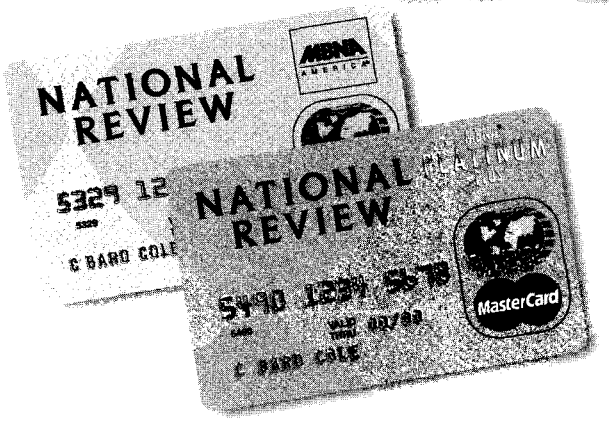

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■ AFRICA ■

Whites Who Bleed

State murder in Zimbabwe

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

A TRUCK pulls up in an African village in Zimbabwe and out jump black "veterans" of the 1970s Rhodesian civil war, all coincidentally supporters of President Mugabe's ruling Zanu-PF party. Armed with automatic weapons and studded clubs, they spread through the huts looking for leaflets, banners, or other evidence of opposition-party loyalties. When they find it, they beat up the unfortunate dissidents, burning some, raping others, murdering the supposed ringleaders, letting some escape in the general mayhem.

Hours later in a New York television studio or print newsroom, an analyst explains these scenes as a regrettable abuse of human rights, of course, but in part an understandable response to the seizure of African land by white farmers several generations ago, and anyway terribly complicated, something to do with decades of entrenched hatreds, like Yugoslavia.

Pity the poor liberal American journalist. In his carefully objective way, he is so used to stories arriving in the already packaged form of a liberal psychodrama—oppressors, usually white and male; victims, generally black or brown; historical causation, centuries of racial and/or colonial oppression—that when one comes along outside this framework, he is reduced to a wary puzzlement.

In Zimbabwe the first victims of Mugabe's pogroms seemed to be the white tobacco farmers. White tobacco farmers! Merchants of cancer? Surely they couldn't be victims simply because they were being attacked and killed. Victimhood should not come that cheap. One was reminded of the exchange in the television sitcom *Yes, Prime Minister* when Sir Humphrey was seeking to persuade Jim Hacker not to give a bishopric to a moderately conservative clergyman:

> "And then he's against oppression in Africa."
>
> "But we're against that too."
>
> "Yes, but he's against it when it's carried out by black governments as well as white ones."
>
> "Oh, you mean he's a racist."
>
> "Exactly, prime minister."

It was with some relief that reporters discovered that most of the victims of the gangs roaming through the Zimbabwean bush were black farm workers. These promptly became the "real" victims of Mugabe. In an otherwise admirably hardheaded column in the London *Times*—coverage in the British press has been both more extensive and more considered than that in the American media—Simon Jenkins argued that to concentrate attention on the white farmers was "racist" since they were just Zimbabweans with white skins.

To be sure, black farm workers are the more numerous victims of the current attacks. Unlike white farmers, many of whom were born in Britain or have some sort of claim to British passports, they have "nowhere else to go" as a way of escaping Mugabe. We should realize that arranging relief flights and aid packages will do them no good at all. The only way to help *them* is either to get rid of Mugabe altogether or to limit his power to wreak violence on his people. Neither solution seems readily available soon.

But that should not be an excuse for failing to help the dictator's white victims in the meantime. Even white tobacco farmers can reasonably plead that "if you prick us, do we not bleed?"

One might argue, of course, that the failure of Western governments and the Western media to highlight or denounce Mugabe's pogroms in the early '80s against Matabele villages that supported his rival Joshua Nkomo showed a racist unconcern with black lives. Several thousand opposition supporters were then killed by Mugabe's government with the fraternal assistance of the North Korean army. But was racism really the reason that the West overlooked it? Surely it was a blinkered leftist desire not to give aid and comfort to white South Africa by legitimizing its fears that black government would be dictatorial, kleptocratic, and genocidal. As long as apartheid existed, the West took Sir Humphrey's view that to oppose black oppression as well as white in Africa was, ahem, "racist." The technical term for such a bias is "anti-racism," which is a variety of racism rather than a rejection of it.

What about the belea-

Robert Mugabe by Ismael Roldan

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Peace with Syria

Should Israel surrender the Golan Heights?

Almost irresistible pressure is being exerted on Israel to surrender the Golan Heights to Syria, in order to achieve peace with that country. The pressure comes, of course, from the Arab countries, but regrettably also from the European nations and even the United States – Israel's best and most steadfast friend.

What are the facts?

Indispensable for Israel's defense. The Golan, a plateau approximately the size of the borough of Queens in New York, has, since biblical times, been a part of Palestine. It was (in a great-power play) ceded by Britain to the French mandate, following World War I. When the French in 1941 granted Syria independence, the Golan became part of that country. It is not, as the Syrians like to claim, "holy Arab territory", of which not an inch can ever be ceded.

Since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the Syrians shelled the settlements of northern Israel almost daily and made life there intolerable. In the War of 1967 (the "Six-Day War"), the Syrians treacherously attacked Israel through the Golan and almost succeeded in defeating it. It would have been the end of the Jewish state. Miraculously, Israel was able to repel the aggressors and to occupy the Golan Heights. The Golan has since then been integrated politically and in every other respect into the State of Israel. What used to be a wilderness has become, under Israeli administration, a successful province, with prospering cities and flourishing agriculture. But most important of all: The Golan is totally indispensable for the defense of Israel.

That makes it incomprehensible why our President, who, like the American people, is interested in the survival of Israel, presses that country to relinquish the Golan. Without the Golan, and with the Golan in the hands of those whose death wish for Israel has never been abandoned, Israel would be indefensible.

Never in the history of the world has a defeated aggressor successfully insisted that territories lost during its aggression be returned to it before being willing to make peace with the victor. Germany does not ask France to return Alsace-Lorraine, nor Poland to return the large chunks of eastern Germany that were allotted to it at the end of World War II. Why then the insistence that tiny Israel deprive itself of an area that is totally vital to its survival?

> "There is a way to make peace with Syria: Israel would return sovereignty of the Golan to Syria, but would lease the territory from it for an agreed-upon period. That is what the British did in Hong Kong and what we are doing in Guantanamo."

Unprecedented though it would be, an agreement with Syria about the Golan would be possible and acceptable to Israel if it would bring about *real* peace with Syria. But that is not in the cards. The hatred against Israel is so deep-seated that it would take progressive leaders and at least a generation or two to overcome it. Syrian newspapers and broadcasts are filled with venom and unending hatred against Israel. Schoolchildren, beginning with the earliest grades, are filled with poisonous invective against the "Nazi-Zionist entity". The official government line is that the Arabs (under Syrian leadership) must mass their resources to "liberate all occupied Arab land". And that, of course, is a code word for Israel. Israel must be eliminated.

Syrian "chutzpah". The gall, the "chutzpah" of the Syrians is almost beyond belief. Syria is a third-rate country, with a bankrupt economy, and – having lost the support of the Soviet Union – a second-rate military power. Still, in their dealings with Israel, they act as though they were victors and in a position of great strength. While Mr. Barak, the Prime Minister of Israel, appears to jump through hoops to "negotiate" with the Syrians, Syria's top man – the dictator, Hafez Assad – cannot be bothered to attend any meetings. He sends his number-two man, who is instructed not to shake hands with the hated Israelis and not to enter any discussions unless the Israelis agree beforehand to every demand the Syrians have to make. It is sad that the Israelis, being in a position of total strength, would consider such humiliating conditions.

In case any agreement on the governmental level were reached that Israel should return the Golan to Syria, such agreement would still be subject to a plebiscite of the Israeli electorate. Such approval should be by a super-majority – namely by a majority of all eligible voters, and not just by a majority of those voting. We in the United States are well acquainted with super-majorities for matters of great consequence, such as amending the Constitution. Could Israel be expected to divest itself of part of its country and of a vital strategic asset by just one vote?

There is a way to make peace with Syria: Israel would return sovereignty of the Golan to Syria, but would lease the territory from it for an agreed-upon period – 25 or 50 years. That is what the British did in Hong Kong and what we are doing in Guantanamo, Cuba. It seems to work out well, even for nations that (as between Cuba and us) are hostile to each other. During such time, one would hope that public opinion in Syria and in the other Arab countries had matured sufficiently for Israel to be able to afford relinquishing this strategic asset. For Syria to agree to such a settlement would be a positive step toward peace – proof of their good intentions. But, regrettably, the acceptance by Syria of such a solution is unlikely.

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guered white farmers? What, for example, is their importance to Zimbabwe? They provide 40 percent of the country's exports; and 23 percent of developed land produces two-thirds of the country's food. Most observers agree that agricultural exports and productivity would suffer greatly if, under "land reform," the economically productive farms (owned by whites) were divided up into small holdings and distributed to their farm workers.

Why is that an irrelevant consideration? Easy: The farms are not going to be divided up into small holdings, but distributed intact to friends and political allies of President Mugabe—and to the president himself who, as Simon Jenkins has written, is so lacking in embarrassment that he even "wins" the state lottery. The present crisis is not about land reform but about political power. Mugabe is seeking both to intimidate his political opponents—some white farmers and many farm workers

■

The present crisis in Zimbabwe is not about land reform but about political power.

■

support the opposition—and to create a political issue that will win him support in the forthcoming election: namely, a racially tinged campaign to "restore" white-owned property to the veterans of a civil war that ended 20 years ago. Many of the "veterans," of course, are too young to have fought in the war.

So why exactly is Mugabe encouraging the seizures? He was at serious risk of losing the forthcoming election. Zimbabwe's economy is in free fall; its currency is collapsing; per capita wages have sunk 35 percent since the early '90s; and only inflation is rising. The president received a serious warning when he unexpectedly lost a national referendum that would have given him expanded powers in an amended constitution. Farm seizures served two purposes: as an issue they rallied black-African support behind him, and as a tactic they concealed a program of physical violence and intimidation against the political opposition. Only a handful of white farmers are political supporters of the opposition; most stay nervously out of post-independence politics; hence it is black farm workers who suffer most at the hands of Mugabe's roving thugs when they are known to be pro-opposition.

Won't this make him an international pariah? Unfortunately, no. Indeed, the present campaign could make Mugabe a regional trendsetter. In the looking-glass world of post-colonial politics, Mugabe has been able to force neighboring states like South Africa to support his demand that Britain finance land redistribution. In part this is a reflection of the continuing ideological power of "anti-racist" politics. But it also reflects public opinion in neighboring states that even prudent politicians like South Africa's President Mbeki cannot ignore. Polls show that most South African blacks admire Mugabe's actions and would like to see similar expropriations down south. Whites are quoted in reply as considering emigration (as, indeed, many thousands of whites have fled Zimbabwe since independence). In the light of current events, it would be hard to persuade them that they are not just a decade away from similar state-sanctioned pogroms.

Will Britain pay the Danegeld? Mr. Blair's position seems to be that Britain is prepared to help finance land reform provided that it is orderly, peaceful, and legal. But that would hand a dramatic political victory to Mugabe, ensure his victory in the election, further ruin Zimbabwe's agriculture and economy, encourage similar "anti-racist" and economically suicidal policies throughout southern Africa, and provoke similar raids on the British Treasury. Mr. Blair would never get rid of the Dane—or indeed Mugabe, whose removal should be the main aim of Western policy since his government is responsible for the near collapse of the Zimbabwean economy.

It is a pity that neither Whitehall nor Washington has yet acquired the wisdom of an elderly farm worker who was asked by the *Wall Street Journal* if he favored land reform and replied: "If they can take it away from the whites, they can take it away from me." For as long as property is insecure, Africa will never prosper. **NR**

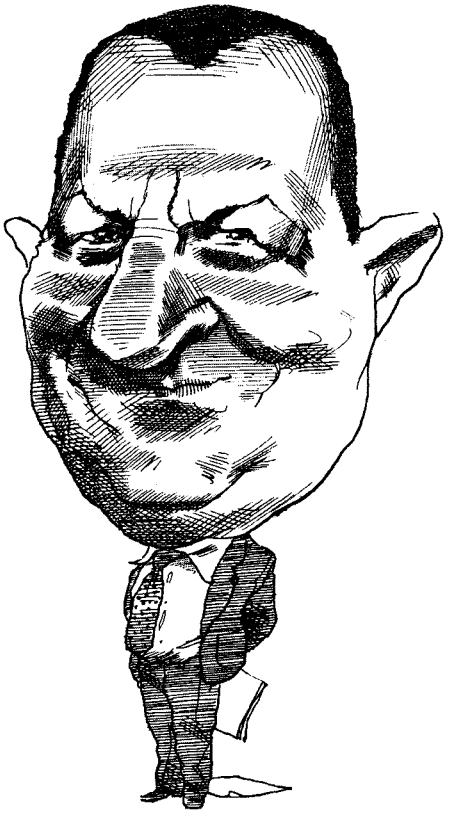
■ THE MIDDLE EAST ■

Israel's Vietnam?

After the pullout from Lebanon

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

DRAMATICALLY, Israel is now committed to withdraw during the first days of this coming July from the so-called security zone it carved out in southern Lebanon 15 years ago. This territory is a mere nine miles deep, but mountainous. Its traditional villages are inhabited mostly by Shia Muslims, with some Christians in their midst. There are few roads and much forestation. But what might look like the prospect of idyllic life is highly misleading. Those villages conceal guerrillas; the paths and woods are perfect for ambushes. The security zone served to keep the guerrillas at a distance that prevented them from firing rockets into Israel and



Ehud Barak by David Smith

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mounting terror attacks against defenseless towns over the border. This, then, is where the latest stage of the Arab–Israeli confrontation has been fought out.

Syria calls the shots in Lebanon. In particular, it sponsors and arms Hezbollah, the Islamic fundamentalist group, mainly Iranian, that is Israel's most fanatical enemy, providing training grounds and bases in Lebanon and Syria from which to attack the security zone and, beyond it, Israel. The Syrian president, Hafiz Assad, has made sure to stamp out with murderous brutality the Islamic fundamentalists in his own country, and he backs Hezbollah only because it is a potentially useful tool. Whenever it suits him to pressure Israel, he unleashes Hezbollah.

Deploying modern weapons and technology, Hezbollah guerrillas have become more and more professional. In the security zone they have killed about 250 Israeli soldiers, a high proportion of them in recent months. For the Israelis to be withdrawing unilaterally and unconditionally, without any sort of treaty, guarantee, or even understanding for the future, is to hand Hezbollah, and therefore its patron Assad, a famous victory. Hitherto considered the best in the Middle East, the Israeli army has met its match. The scale is smaller, to be sure, but such an ignominious turn-tail bears the marks of Israel's very own Vietnam.

When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, the purpose was to put an end to Palestinian terror. The campaign disrupted local settled life. The predicament of the Shia and Christian villagers was horrible. They had not asked to be on the front line. At moments of crisis, they fled, only to return in order to defend their homes and farms. By and large, they came to judge the Palestinians to be a greater danger than the Israelis, and accordingly turned to Israel for help. The Israeli presence in the security zone has been limited to small infantry units, with some armor. Enlisting by the thousands under their own officers in a militia known as the South Lebanese Army, or SLA, the local Shia and Christians have borne the burden of policing and defending the zone—in other words, their homeland.

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Palestinians in general are seen by the Lebanese as disturbers of the peace, and harbingers of violence. Palestinians also have military bases and training grounds in Lebanon for their militias. Nobody really knows whether these men owe allegiance to Yasser Arafat and the Palestine entity—probably a state—that he is in the process of consolidating, or to the careerist officers who command the militias. But then nobody had been able to foresee that Palestinian guerrillas would come to be completely overshadowed by Hezbollah. Both groups might share the same anti-Israeli objective, but no less important, they have been rivals, competing for power.

To the guerrillas and their sponsors of every stripe, the SLA has always been a puppet organization of traitors and quislings. Come July, these men and their families face kangaroo courts and summary execution. Fifteen thousand of them have already been condemned to death in absentia. There is a sinister precedent: The French in Algeria enrolled tens of thousands of Algerians loyal to them, known as *harkis*. The majority of *harkis* escaped to France, where they have lived unhappily ever since, while those who stayed were hunted to their deaths. Perhaps Israel will grant all SLA men and their families refuge. Gen. Antoine Lahad, the Christian commander of the SLA, has already secured his getaway to Paris. Any of those left behind seem set to learn the old and bitter lesson that expedient allies are not to be trusted.

But the puzzle remains: Why ever are the Israelis giving up a valuable protective position without receiving anything in return? The explanation seems to lie in that no man's land between politics and mass psychology. Ehud Barak, the Israeli prime minister, won the election last year with a huge bouquet of promises. He was going to finalize the peace process of the Oslo Accords. In advance of any reciprocal assurance from Assad, he declared often and loudly that he would break the deadlock with Syria. This could only mean the return of the Golan Heights, captured in the Six Day War of 1967. He also let it be known that he would negotiate final terms with Arafat, with the clear implication of large-scale surrender of territory on the captured West Bank, the prelude to Palestinian statehood.

To engage in two simultaneous negotiations with existential significance for all concerned was bound to be complicated. A number of observers argued that Barak should have simplified matters by deciding which had priority—settlement with the Palestinians or peace with Syria. A success with either one of these parties would have had positive implications for the other case. Instead, a paralyzing contradiction emerged. If Israel was willing in principle to return the whole Golan Heights to Syria, then the Palestinians could expect in principle that Israel would return the whole West Bank to them. What applied in the one case applied logically in the other. With all the par-

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ties emphasizing disputed frontiers and contradictory rights, push has come to shove. Assad shows no interest in compromise, and the latest round of negotiations with the Palestinians at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington petered out.

In these circumstances, retreat from the Lebanese security zone underlines that Israel wants out at any price. Battle fatigue is reinforcing loss of morale. But for Hezbollah and the Palestinian militias in Lebanon, an enticing vacuum has opened, and they can hardly wait to rush into it, first to settle scores with the SLA, then to establish positions that will extend the range of their rockets those nine crucial miles further into Israel.

■

With all the parties emphasizing disputed frontiers and contradictory rights, push has come to shove.

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All these years, Syrian and Lebanese officials from the president downward have denounced the Israeli security zone as an illegitimate occupation. They ought to be mightily relieved to see an end to it. Instead, they are now denouncing just as fiercely the planned withdrawal, on the grounds that it is even more of a threat to peace than the status quo. The paradox is not as grotesque as it looks. If either Hezbollah or Palestinian guerrillas do in fact fire rockets or mount incursions from the former security zone, Israeli reprisals are bound to be severe. The consequences are unpredictable.

Withdrawal from the security zone puts Assad on the spot, taunting him to show who is master of events. This policy is made still more dangerous because Assad's ill health is undoubtedly worsening; he may have had a stroke in April. Stability in Syria cannot be assumed. Spokesmen in Tel Aviv go on to warn that in the event of violence against Israel on the part of guerrillas occupying the former security zone, the infrastructure of Lebanon will be taken out, in a repeat of NATO's crippling of Milosevic's Serbia. Or if Hafiz Assad, in

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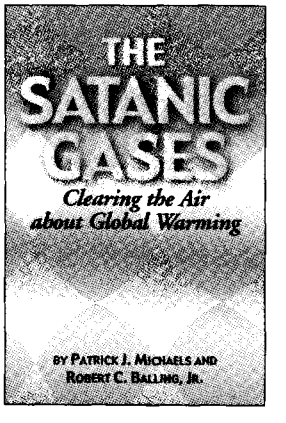

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his continuous attempt to force Israel to evacuate the Golan Heights on his terms, is responsible for attacks, then Syrian military installations in Lebanon might be targeted, and perhaps even the infrastructure of Syria itself. Small United Nations detachments are already in the area, and the Lebanese prime minister in panic is calling for them to be reinforced. In the light of U.N. incapacity to prevent earlier clashes in the country, there seems no point in such a demand, and even less likelihood of its fulfillment.

Israel is about to discover the cost of those fine election promises of Barak's, and so is the unfortunate SLA. If the summer passes without bloodshed, it will be a matter of good luck rather than judgment. **NR**

■ **ON CAMPUS** ■

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New frontiers in roommates

NAOMI SCHAEFER

FOR almost four decades, college administrators—faced with successive waves of the sexual revolution—have followed a policy that might be labeled "aggressive appeasement." First, women's curfews were abolished. Next, dorms were rendered "coeducational" (and "sleepovers" accepted as a matter of course). Soon, university health services were routinely distributing or even pushing condoms; gay-advocacy groups were being given official sanction, even at Catholic schools; and Williams College led the way in abolishing single-sex bathrooms.

As Neville Chamberlain might with hindsight have conceded, appeasement tends only to heighten the demands of those being appeased. So, what might there be left for sexual liberators to demand? Haverford College recently announced that beginning next fall, it will allow men and women to share bedrooms in dormitories. The administration's decision comes partly in response to complaints of discrimination from the school's homosexual population. These students claim that the current requirement that roommates be of the same gender sometimes forces them to live in uncomfortable situations. While there are a few other colleges around the country—Hampshire, Antioch, Wesleyan—that allow for coed rooming arrangements, Haverford may be the first "mainstream" liberal-arts institution to adopt this policy.

Another university wrestling with this issue is Tufts. Senior Carl Sciortino Jr., former co-chair of the school's Transgendered, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Collective, launched a campaign for co-ed rooms last fall, explaining that a number of his friends have had "negative housing experiences." "There are roommate issues where homophobia becomes a major problem," he told the *Boston Globe*, citing instances of anti-gay graffiti and heterosexual students' moving out when they find themselves with a gay roommate. But Sciortino also was worried about gay students' being forced into same-gender rooms because "students in the past have found themselves having a major crush on their straight roommate, and that's a really uncomfortable situation."

Sciortino worked with the dean of students to develop a pilot program under which 20 students who had signed consent forms would be assigned to live in 10 mixed-gender rooms. The consent forms would state the students' willingness to live in such rooms and would pledge that they were not romantically "involved" with the roommates. Since the form would not ask the students to specify their sexual orientation, the program could not be restricted to homosexual students. "I'm not really interested in the fact that this would help straight couples, but that's fine if it does," said Sciortino.

It wasn't fine with Tufts University president John DiBiaggio. In March, he flatly rejected the plan: "We're directed by university policy, and university policy is that housing will be single-sex, and that's what we're sticking with." DiBiaggio gives several reasons for denying Sciortino's requests. "I think traditionally we have had single-sex rooms because of liability issues," he says, citing concerns about "the kinds of circumstances and conflicts that might arise from [coed rooms]."

Beyond the legal issues involved, which might perhaps be circumvented by consent forms, DiBiaggio also remarks that "while we realize many of our students are sexually active, we don't see it as our role to encourage it." Catching himself sounding a little backward for a university president, he adds, "I'm not saying that we are prudish. We are not acting *in loco parentis*. But we are dealing with life-threatening venereal diseases here."

DiBiaggio did offer some alternatives for homosexual students who are uncomfortable with their living situations, such as making it easier for students to move off campus in their first or second year. Moreover, he says, "the college does its best to accommodate students' requests to change rooms." So if a homosexual student did feel uncomfortable with his roommate, alternative arrangements could be made. "Particularly freshman year, we are aware that we are randomly placing people together, and we know they are not always compatible."

DiBiaggio should be wary, though. This same policy of accommodating students wishing to switch roommates has occasioned much criticism of Harvard University's administration. Last fall, Harvard's undergraduate council passed a resolution asking the administration to "end the practice of allowing a student to change rooms solely because she or he [!] is uncomfortable with the sexual orientation of her or his roommate before making a sincere attempt to live with that person." Currently, incoming Harvard freshmen can ask to switch rooms over the summer if they find out that their roommate is gay and are uncomfortable with the situation. Representatives of the council argue that the freshman dean's office is creating "an environment in which homophobia is seen as an acceptable belief which should be accommodated." Predictably, some students liken Harvard's policy to accommodating prejudices against rooming with persons of other races or religions.

Miss Schaefer is assistant editor of *Commentary*.

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As one *Crimson* writer explains, "With slight tweaking, any bigot can get roommates of the ethnic background, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation of his or her choice."

At Harvard, Tufts, and other schools, university administrators are being asked to follow a new double standard. In rooming decisions, accommodating the preferences of homosexual students should be mandatory, but doing the same for a heterosexual student is blatant bigotry. While homosexual students claim it is discriminatory for them to be compelled to live with members of the same sex, heterosexual students claim that it is unfair that they are not allowed to live with their "significant others," as homosexual students now can. And these are only the relatively clear categories. Many schools are also faced with the question of what to do with "transgendered" students, who believe they belong to the opposite sex from their biological one and wish to act accordingly.

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A decade ago, what university administrator anticipated having to address the grievances of a 'transgendered' student population?

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At schools like Antioch, the issues are less confusing: Students have completely free choice about their living arrangements. There is nothing more normal about living in single-sex rooms, or on single-sex halls, than with members of the opposite sex. In fact, Antioch administrators actually have to present reasons in the student handbook explaining why students might want to live with members of their own gender: "Some students choose single-sex halls for issues related to past sexual offenses, and the unexpected presence of members of the opposite sex in a residential space could be very difficult for them." Aside from rape victims, apparently, no one has a plausible reason to prefer single-sex housing.

Most colleges, however, have not yet gone the Antioch way. In fact, many academic administrators seem downright baffled. In looking at the proposal for coed rooms, DiBiaggio says, he kept wondering, "Who would make those judgments? Who would be the policemen?" The issues, he observes, "are much more complicated than they seem to students." To explain his position, DiBiaggio cites comparable debates in the nonacademic world. "When the argument is made [that homosexual students feel uncomfortable about rooming with students of the same gender,] it flies in the face of the fact that many of us have been engaged in trying to change military policy on gays. If students can't live in this situation, what will they do in the military living with someone who is not gay?"

Of course, administrators at Tufts, Antioch, and most other colleges long ago gave up the high ground on issues of sexual morality. Like DiBiaggio, however, many such administrators still feel squeamish about authorizing mixed-gender rooming, even if they seem to have difficulty articulating their reasons. When asked by an AP reporter whether Villanova University might consider mixed-gender dorm rooms like its neighbor Haverford, Christine Lysionek, head of the school's dormitories, responded, "I think there [are] privacy issues, there [are] developmental issues, there [are] educational issues. We're certainly not where Haverford is, nor would we ever want to be."

Then again, a decade ago what university administrator anticipated having to address the grievances of a "transgendered" student population? Or having to distinguish racism from a distaste for living with a practicing homosexual? Meanwhile, outside observers can only wonder what arrows can possibly be left in the liberationist quiver. Recognition of a Student Polygamists Association? Fully equipped S&M chambers installed in each dormitory? What about employing comely work-study enrollees to cater to the needs of their less attractive, sexually starved classmates?

This just in: The state of Iowa has announced the establishment of several scholarships to the state's public universities, each to be awarded to an "openly gay" student. Just how open hasn't yet been specified. **NR**

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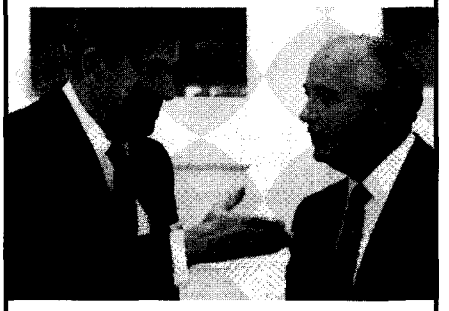

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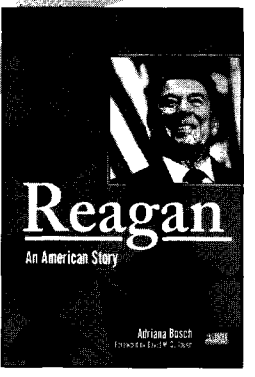

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■ COVER STORY ■

Elián Nation

He makes our battlefield plain as day

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

ONCE in a while, some issue in our public life—not necessarily an issue of great intrinsic importance—acts like a flare sent up over a nighttime battlefield, throwing all the contours into sharp relief and shedding light on dark places. The Clarence Thomas hearings were such an issue; the impeachment was of course another.

The affair of Elián González has also been a flare, revealing much about our political landscape. It has, for example, shown that reflective thought and intellectual complexity are now almost exclusive to the Right, while the Left is more monolithic and thinking-impaired than ever. As a conservative journalist expressed it to a colleague: "I am torn on Elián, really torn. But what burns me is that the liberals are not torn. They are bright and breezy; they know exactly what they think." It is not so much a case of Yeats—"The best lack all conviction, while the worst/Are full of passionate intensity"—as of Tolstoy: Happy liberals are all alike, while each conservative is distraught in his own way.

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There has, in fact, been no uniformity of opinion on the right. Some very thoughtful and respectable conservative voices have from the beginning favored returning Elián to his father. There is even some *anti*-Elián feeling on the right. A friend of mine with strong Buchananite views has told me that if the boy were allowed to stay here he would become "a poster child for unrestricted immigration." Others maintain that a child belongs with his father under any circumstances whatever. *Any* circumstances? Father a plantation slave? Father in Auschwitz? George Will referred to this child-to-father-at-any-cost line of thinking as "making a fetish of biology." And on the larger issue of relations with Cuba, I think there is actually a majority on the right—I am speaking of sentiment, not working politics—for lifting the embargo on trade. We trade with China (my friends point out); we traded with the USSR even in the darkest days of Stalinism; why not trade with Castro? Those of us who cleave to the nuke-Havana policy line are now a diminishing minority among conservatives.

Mr. Derbyshire is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

FAMILIAR FEATURES

The Left, by contrast, is confident and united. All the familiar features on that side of the battlefield have come out sharp and plain: the dishonesty; the credulity; the snobbery; the sentimentality; the fierce hatred of religion; the disdain for guns and the military combined with a readiness to use both in overwhelming quantity to attain leftist policy goals; the lingering affection for Communism joined with a tenacious, burning, never-forgiving, never-relenting anti-anti-Communism.

Speaking for myself, as a product of the provincial English working class, it has been the snobbery of the Left that I have found most offensive. Behind media coverage of Lázaro González, his family, and his neighborhood, you can hear the gilded sneer of John F. Kennedy dismissing Richard Nixon: "No class." Show a liberal a small, cheap tract house with a chain-link fence around it and plaster statues of the Blessed Virgin on the mantel, and watch his lip begin to curl. Lázaro González's two DUI convictions have been well advertised in the media, though many of us would regard DUI as less flagitious than, say, subornation of perjury. *Washington Post* writers seem to be especially intent on rubbing in the deplorably unchic lifestyle of the González family. Richard Cohen: "How pathetic. An auto repairman stared down the United States government." Mary McGrory: "I watched Lázaro González, an auto mechanic, standing up to the Attorney General of the United States . . ." Neither of these writers is happy about the disgraceful lèse-majesté of Lázaro González. Neither has a clue that when an auto repairman can stare down the full power of the government, democracy is alive and well. They prefer Cuba, where such a thing could never happen.

And what moues of distaste on NBC's *Today* program, when

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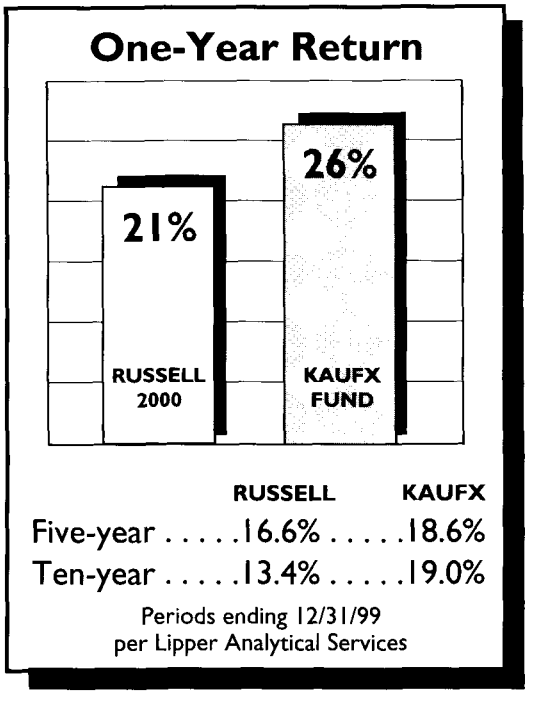
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Andrea Mitchell revealed to Katie Couric that Donato Dalrymple, the man who rescued Elián from the sea and was with him when he was seized, was not a fisherman, as previously reported, but a housecleaner. Being a fisherman is sort of respectable: Kennedys go sea fishing, after all, and isn't there something about fishermen in that Bible thing? But a *housecleaner!* That is something else.

Another manifestation of Left snobbery is their disdain for the poor media skills of the Miami Gonzálezes—as if plain working people, suddenly thrown into the media spotlight, can fairly be criticized for not displaying the PR sophistication of a Greg Craig, Eric Holder, or Harry Thomason. Elián's time in Miami was not spent in a secure location populated by Secret Service minders, Cuban intelligence operatives, and government psychiatrists (first thing we do, let's kill all the shrinks); instead it was spent largely in public view, as the boy played on a Toys 'R Us swingset or was chased around the tiny yard by his cousins, who were obviously spoiling him disgracefully. This, we learned from Andrea Mitchell on the evening news, was child abuse: "The noise, the crowds, the late-night rallies, the home video. Being on constant display." Mitchell's guest, Professor David Elkind of Tufts University, chimed in: "I think that the family has really abused this child . . . He's been exposed to all sorts of media hype."

The family of Lázaro González were playing David to a mighty, arrogant, hostile Goliath.

But what were the family supposed to do, given their resources and vulnerability? Build a twelve-foot wall around their property? Keep the kid shut in his room? Suddenly adopt the child-raising practices of Georgetown yuppies? In the media contest, as in the final confrontation with Reno's palace guard, the family of Lázaro González were playing David to a mighty, arrogant, and hostile Goliath. There was a time when the Left stood up for the underdog—for the worker against the boss, the maladroit against the polished, the lone individual against the state. No longer: Liberals speak now for money and power, and scoff unashamedly at those who do not share elite values or practice elite lifestyles.

The religiosity of Lázaro's family and their supporters has drawn particular scorn from liberal commentators, who hate religion even more than they hate working-class white people. The story of dolphins helping Elián to stay afloat on the open sea has been the subject of much mockery. Garry Wills, writing in the *New York Times*, seems to believe that this little fable justified major force all by itself: "That kind of superstition . . . shows why resistance had to be anticipated and precluded in Miami." In other words: People like that must be demented and dangerous (see under "Waco"). Conversely, those places from which all religion has been purged—places like Castro's Cuba—are havens of sanity and nonviolence. *Newsweek*, April 17: "In some ways young Elián might expect a nurturing life in Cuba, sheltered from the crime and social breakdown that would be part of his upbringing in Miami. The boy will nestle in a more peaceable society that treasures its children." Larry King, on his CNN program, with Al and Tipper Gore as guests: "One of the things that Elián González's father said that I guess it would be hard to argue with [is] that his boy's safer in a school in Havana than in a school in Miami." (This was too much even for a Gore: Tipper made a feeble protest.)

Liberals have their own superstitions, of course, some of them so thoroughly internalized, they have the appearance of reflex actions. For example: You must never flatly condemn any Leninist society without at the same time pointing out some redeeming feature. Here is Thomas L. Friedman, also in the *Times*, speaking of the Castro regime: "It is an awful government *that has taught its people to write*—and then forced its most educated to become taxi drivers . . . in order to feed their families." [My italics.] Friedman's piece is a sort of condensation of all liberal follies, packing the sentimentality and credulity of the liberal mind into a couple of sentences: "I was warmed by the picture of Elián back in his father's arms. Some things you can fake—like a 6-year-old wagging his finger on a homemade video and telling his father to go back to Cuba without him—and some things you can't fake." Apparently Friedman believes that it is easier to fake video footage than still photographs. In fact the opposite is the case, by a very long way.

DAN RATHER AND 'DISTANT RELATIVES'

Surveying media coverage of the "rescue" of Elián González from those posturing, abusive white-trash religious cultists in Miami back into the warm bosom of Fidel Castro, it is difficult to pick out truly egregious cases from so much ignorance and dishonesty, but I am going to try. Among TV commentators the most reliable mouthpiece for the Castro-Clinton line has been Dan Rather. Rather set the tone for all that followed in his April 16 interview of Juan Miguel González for *60 Minutes*, during which he modestly restricted his role to prompting Sr. González through the scripts provided for him by his Cuban handlers. On the Saturday morning of the Miami raid, Rather was on the air for over five hours. It was a long and shameful performance, with two especially low points. The first: a suggestion to the CBS legal consultant that Juan Miguel González might sue his Miami relatives for "allowing the child's privacy to be, as they might say, trampled in this way." The lawyer, of course (he's a *lawyer!*), eagerly concurred. Then, later, this: "Among the many images and sounds of this morning, this has to be one that really gets through to the heart. That the immigration service says that the female agent who carried little Elián from his home, from the home of these distant relatives in Miami, talked to him in Spanish, and she says the message, worked out in advance, to the child, was, and I quote: 'This may seem very scary, but it will soon be better . . .'" At which point Rather cracked up and actually wept. Those agents—so warm, so caring! This was what sitcom writers call "the moment of s**t."

And note that gratuitous, disgraceful adjective "distant"—as if Juan Miguel's uncle should have been turned away from the hospital where Elián lay blistered and delirious after his ordeal at sea. Until a few days ago, the extended family was supposed to be one of those charming folksy characteristics of the many

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and diverse immigrant cultures in our glorious national mosaic. It Took a Village to Raise a Child. Suddenly only a Dad will do. Not even Stalin could switch the party line faster than our corrupt, amoral, power-obsessed elites. Is the sexual servicing of male boss by female employee an outrage this year, a manifestation of the unrestrained domination of the Patriarchy, or just alpha-male behavior to be smiled at indulgently? It is so hard to keep up with liberal fashions in morality.

Among print journalists, I think Douglas Montero of the *New York Post* deserves special mention. Either Montero is a paid agent of Fidel's Ministry of Truth, or he is a fool for doing the work unpaid. His columns are simply direct conduits for Cuban government propaganda—the stuff just comes straight through, unfiltered. On April 25 he filed a report entirely given over to the sufferings of Cuban children whose parents, at the time of Castro's revolution, had been panicked by a CIA psy-war operation into sending the tots to America unaccompanied. "The kids were stuffed into cramped living conditions and, in some cases, abused and even raped by their church caretakers. . . . The U.S. government . . . prevented the parents from traveling to the United States to be with their kids." Just like Elián, see? And with child abuse, anticlericalism, and a CIA plot thrown in—what a story! It turns out that Montero is reading to us straight from a book just put out by the Castro regime. Nobody has been able to find evidence of such a plot.

About Montero I confess a sort of awe-struck fascination—awe, I mean, that anyone who holds a job writing newspaper commentary can be so ignorant of what has happened in the world this past 83 years. On April 27, his column was given over to a classic exposition of moral equivalence: "Castro plans to instill communism in the boy's mind because he thinks it's right, just like the Miami exile community wants to shove capitalism into the mind of this child." Back in Cold War days, Bernard Levin used to deal with this stuff by pointing out that if you looked very closely at the brave souls who risked their lives to get over the Berlin Wall, *they were all headed in the same direction.*

NOSTALGIA, NO

The Cold War is over, of course, and many in the media are puzzled as to why we should feel any animosity toward Castro when his significance to our national security has been downgraded from threat to nuisance. There are no issues of national security involved, we are told; the interests of little Elián are paramount. Al Hunt, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, said, "The reason the political demagoguery of the critics hasn't worked is simple: Unlike them, the American public is less interested in any political agenda and more in what's best for a six-year-old-child." Unfortunately, this is true. Probably no large part of the American public believes there is any issue here but the welfare of a child. To those of us from other places, where nations jostle against each other more abrasively, and have much longer histories of folly and miscalculation to draw lessons from, this belief is terribly mistaken. It might have been tenable when the case was one of simple child custody, but once Fidel Castro began to politicize it, *raison d'état* kicked in, and the interests of the United States had to be taken into account.

Raison d'état is not a phrase that trips easily off American tongues; but this nation really does have enemies, who watch our affairs with close attention and lay their plans accordingly. Does anybody really believe that the spectacle of our government's highest officials scurrying to do the bidding of Fidel Castro can be anything other than harmful to this country? What lesson will be taken by other nations that seek to vex, humiliate, or intimidate us? America, as every foreigner knows, wants to be loved. This is endearing in its own way, but no basis for national self-assertion. Whether Americans like it or not, this nation is the sole superpower, and the standard-bearer of the highest civilized values—"the hope of the world", as Bertrand Russell said. It is proper for the U.S. to display a proud and confident attitude, and an undoubted determination to defy and harass those who have the impudence to declare themselves her enemies. *Oderint dum metuant*, said the Romans—"Let them hate us, so long as they fear us." The U.S., which is not an imperial power, need not be quite so ferocious; but surely *Contemnant dum ament*—"Let them despise us so long as they love us" (I hope I have got my subjunctives right)—is not a proper posture for a great nation. Fidel Castro is our enemy, as he never ceases to remind us. Let us treat him accordingly.

Fidel Castro is our enemy, as he never ceases to remind us. Let us treat him accordingly.

Detestation of Castro, and determination to thwart his designs, has nothing to do with Cold War nostalgia, as is often charged both by the Castro-swooning Left and the isolationist Right. It is a simple matter of national self-assertion—a practice to which I believe we should give more attention. A nation should behave like a nation, just as a man should behave like a man. In particular, a nation should not permit itself to be pushed around by another nation, if it has the power to do anything about it.

When Argentina invaded the British Falkland Islands in 1982, the Buenos Aires mob took to the streets chanting: "The Queen is in a rage! The Queen is in a rage!" Margaret Thatcher did what she had to do. This was not a move in the Cold War; the Argentine junta used to shoot Communists when they found them, and so presumably were on our side in the larger conflict. Thatcher simply knew, by infallible instinct, that if a nation allowed such an outrage to stand, that nation would lose respect; and the same instinct told her that respect is a tangible asset in international affairs. Soon the Argentine mob was singing a different song; and a little while after that, as a consequence of the national humiliation they felt at losing the Falklands War, the people of Argentina dumped their dictator and embraced democracy.

Some weeks or months from now, little Elián González will be paraded on a float through the streets of Havana while Castro's mob chants: "Uncle Sam is in a rage!" Who will change *their* tune? Who will help *them* towards democracy? **NR**

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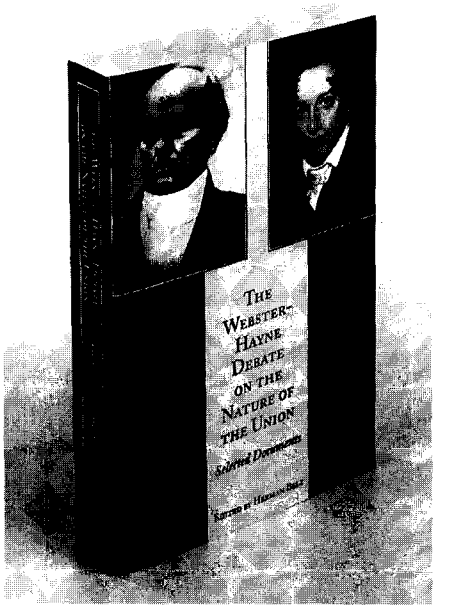
THE WEBSTER-HAYNE DEBATE ON THE NATURE OF THE UNION

Introduction by Herman Belz



The debates between Daniel Webster of Massachusetts and Robert Hayne of South Carolina gave fateful utterance to the differing understandings of the nature of the American Union that had come to predominate in the North and the South, respectively, by 1830. To Webster the Union was the indivisible expression of one nation of people. To Hayne the Union was the voluntary compact among sovereign states. Each man spoke more or less for his section, and their classic expositions of their respective views framed the political conflicts that culminated at last in the secession of the Southern states and war between advocates of Union and champions of Confederacy. ***The Webster-Hayne Debate*** consists of speeches delivered in the United States Senate in January of 1830. By no means were Webster and Hayne the only Senators who engaged in debate "on the nature of the Union." Well over a score of the Senate's members spoke in response in sixty-five speeches all told, and these Senators did not merely echo either of the principals. The key speakers and viewpoints are included in ***The Webster-Hayne Debate***. The volume opens with Hayne's speech, which, as Herman Belz observes, turned debates on "the public lands" into "a clash between state sovereignty and national sovereignty, expounded as rival and irreconcilable theories of constitutional construction and the nature of the federal Union." Webster responded, Hayne retorted, and Webster concluded with an appeal to "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable," in what later historians would deem to be "the most powerful and effective speech ever given in an American legislature." Other speeches in the volume are by Senators Thomas Hart Benton, John Rowan, William Smith, John M. Clayton, and Edward Livingston. Together, these speeches represent every major perspective on "the nature of the Union" in the early nineteenth century.

Herman Belz is Professor of History at the University of Maryland, and the author most recently of *A Living Constitution or Fundamental Law?: American Constitutionalism in Historical Perspective* and *Abraham Lincoln, Constitutionalism, and Equal Rights During the Civil War Era.*

Foreword, notes on the text, bibliography, index.

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Smash-up Policing

When law enforcement goes military

DAVE KOPEL

THE seizing of Elián González will earn a Pulitzer Prize for photographer Alan Diaz, who caught the federal agent waving a machine gun at the terrified boy. The picture shocked many Americans, but there's something even more shocking that's not in the picture: Similar events—in which people are assaulted in their homes by SWAT teams waving machine guns, spewing foul language, threatening to shoot people, and trashing the house as a tactical distraction—happen every day in the United States, without media attention.

Because of the war on drugs, law enforcement throughout the U.S. has been militarized. The Founding Fathers worked hard to prevent oppression by standing armies, but the militarization of law enforcement is making more and more Americans subject to precisely the kind of violence the Founders worried about.

The Los Angeles police department started the trend in the 1960s when future police chief Daryl Gates created the first Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. Gates had originally wanted to call it a "Special Weapons Attack Team," but changed the name for public-relations purposes.

In the 1980s, violent home invasions under the pretext of drug-law enforcement became routine. In 1988, for example, LAPD officers, including members of the department's task force on gangs, broke into and destroyed four apartments on Dalton Avenue; the apartments were suspected to be crack dens, but in fact were not. The officers who participated in the raid were promoted.

The police in Fresno, Calif., have taken the next step: The Fresno SWAT team now deploys a full-time patrol unit, in complete battle gear. According to criminologist Peter Kraska, the Fresno police department considers the SWAT patrol an "unqualified success," and "is encouraging other police agencies to follow suit."

Kraska also notes that "perhaps as many as 20 percent" of police departments in cities with a population over 50,000 have already put their own paramilitary units into street police work. In many cases, money for these deployments comes from "community policing" grants from the federal government.

When law-enforcement agencies create SWAT teams, they often assure the public that the squads will be used for hostage rescue and similar activities. Fortunately, there are not enough actual hostage takings to keep the SWAT teams busy; as a result, the paramilitary units have a tendency to look for other tasks, ones in which there is no need for their special violent skills.

Today, the vast majority of SWAT deployments are to serve search warrants in cases of suspected drug sales or possession. Serving a search warrant by violently breaking into a house (as opposed to knocking first and demanding entry) is justifiable in certain situations—such as when the occupants are known to be armed and dangerous—but not in most. Former New York City police commissioner William Bratton has explained: "In those instances where the suspect might be armed, we would call in a special tactics unit. Over time, though, it became common to always use the tactical unit no matter what or who the warrant was for. They used stun grenades each time and looked at it as practice."

The victims of these raids are not just people who break the drug laws. Rev. Accelynne Williams was a substance-abuse counselor in a poor neighborhood in Boston. One evening in 1994, he was visited in his apartment by a substance abuser who also happened to be an undercover informant in the pay of the Boston police. Later, the informant tried to direct the police to the address of a drug dealer in the apartment above that of Rev. Williams—but the police misread the informant's floor plan as directing them to the Reverend's apartment. Of course, if the police had checked, they would have discovered that the apartment they were actually raiding belonged to a 70-year-old retired Methodist minister, and that there were no signs of drug activity at the apartment.

The trend toward excessive use of force has spread well beyond police departments.

Armed with the search warrant, however, and plenty of firearms, the police broke into Rev. Williams's apartment, screamed obscenities at him, chased him into his bedroom, shoved him to the floor, and handcuffed him while pointing guns at his head. He promptly died of a heart attack.

In Denver last September, Ismael Mena was shot dead in his home during an invasion by a SWAT team. The officers were acting on the basis of a search warrant claiming that $20 worth of crack had once been sold in Mena's home. In fact, the "confidential informant" had given the wrong address.

This trend toward excessive use of force has spread well beyond police departments: The *Colorado Daily* has reported that even the campus police at the University of Colorado at Boulder have received SWAT-style "sniper training with AR-15 rifles, a semiautomatic version of the M-16." (This was deemed necessary for the campus police, even though the Boulder police department already had a SWAT unit.)

The desire of smaller law-enforcement agencies to emulate their big brothers is one cause of police militarization; Washington's encouragement is another. A federal statute requires that surplus military equipment (such as M-16 automatic rifles, night-vision scopes, and even combat vehicles) be donated to domestic law enforcement. Another federal law subsidizes local police hiring of ex-military personnel, and it is ex-military who account for almost all SWAT-team members. The Navy SEALs, the Army's Delta Force, and other

Mr. Kopel is research director of the Independence Institute, a free-market think tank in Colorado.

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elite military attack forces provide extensive free training to police tactical teams, and this training is funded by congressional drug-war dollars. But military training—which stresses absolute obedience and swift annihilation of the target—is not appropriate for good police behavior, which, after all, requires capturing suspected criminals (not killing them), minimizing the use of force, and acting with a scrupulous regard for the Constitution.

In contrast to ordinary police officers, who usually dress in blue, "tactical officers" are garbed in black to maximize their intimidating effect. Michael Solomon, a Rutgers University professor who studies the psychology of clothing, explains that black uniforms tap "into associations between the color black and authority, invincibility, the power to violate laws with impunity."

The weapon of choice for SWAT teams is the Heckler & Koch MP5 submachine gun—the kind that the INS agent was waving at Elián González. Heckler & Koch's advertising to civilian law enforcement conveys the message that by owning the weapon, the civilian officer will be the equivalent of a member of an elite military strike force, such as the Navy SEALs. The ad copy links civilian law enforcement to military combat, with lines like "From the Gulf War to the Drug War."

But the most dangerous aspect of police militarization isn't the machine guns: It's the change in police attitudes. In a constitutional republic, policemen are supposed to be "peace officers." Police militarization promotes maximal use of force as a solution, even when no force at all is required. If the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms did not have so many "Special Response Teams," BATF might have reacted differently at Waco—taking up David Koresh's telephone offer to let them come and investigate his guns. What they did instead was "serve" a search warrant through a 76-man helicopter, grenade, and machine-gun attack on a home containing dozens of children.

Janet Reno's initial justification for using a SWAT team (instead of normal immigration agents) to snatch Elián González was that somebody in the house or in the crowd outside might have been armed. (She had in mind a security guard who had a handgun-carry permit issued by the state of Florida.) Her theory offers a rationale for SWAT-team invasion of any home in the U.S., any time there is a search warrant to be served: About half of all households contain firearms, and the police do not know which ones.

In the 1995 decision in *Wilson* v. *Arkansas*, a unanimous Supreme Court rejected the idea that mere invocation of the words "guns" or "drugs" could justify no-knock "dynamic entries." But even after *Wilson*, no-knock operations carried out by tactical teams are routine in drug cases.

New York University law professor Paul Chevigny points out that in the long run, the police will be the biggest losers from police militarization and its accompanying mentality: "The police think of themselves as an occupying army, and the public comes to think the same. The police lose the connection with the public which is a principal advantage to local policing, and their job becomes progressively more difficult, while they become more unpopular."

An erosion of public confidence in the police has to be a matter of grave concern for anyone who cares about the future of law and order. **NR**

1998 and All That

The Lewinsky affair nailed—at last

JAY NORDLINGER

"WE'VE been over and over this." That's what George Stephanopoulos would say. That's what any other Clintonite would say. That's what they *always* say when confronted with inconvenient facts or questions. Stephanopoulos pioneered this technique in the 1992 campaign, when he tried to make Gennifer Flowers go away. He pretty much succeeded, too. Isn't the public weary of this? he would say. Can't you get on to something else? What are you, some kind of obsessive? A *Clinton-hater*?

We have, it is true, been "over and over" the Clinton messes, including the Lewinsky affair. But not well enough. The Clinton fog machine belches day and night, trying to obscure what ought to be plain. The president himself revises and spins at every opportunity. He will likely spend the rest of his life beclouding the events of his presidency—portraying himself as the would-be victim of a lawless right-wing cabal. The American Society of Newspaper Editors had a taste of his act at a recent meeting. Clinton put on a remarkable performance, and a typical one. He knows his lines to a T.

"I made a terrible personal mistake. I think I have paid for it. . . . On the impeachment, I am proud of what we did there, because I think we saved the Constitution of the United States. First of all, I had to defeat the Republican revolution in 1994, when they shut down the government, and we beat back the Contract on America. [This is what Clinton and other Democrats call the GOP's "Contract *with* America."] Then we had to beat it in the impeachment issue. Then we had to beat it when I vetoed the tax cut last year."

And "I am not ashamed of the fact that they impeached me. That was their decision, not mine. And it was wrong. As a matter of law, the Constitution, and history, it was wrong. And I am glad I didn't quit, and I'm glad we fought it. And the American people stuck with me, and I am profoundly grateful." Yes, "I'll deal with impeachment" in the presidential library to be built in Arkansas. "But you have to understand: I consider it one of the major chapters in my defeat of the revolution Mr. Gingrich led, that would have taken this country in a very different direction than it's going today, and also would have changed the Constitution forever, in a way that would have been very destructive to the American people."

The president even had a book recommendation. Two, actually. "If you want to know what's really been going on, you have a good book here, Mr. Toobin's book. You have the Joe Conason and Gene Lyons book, which explains how this all happened."

Say this for Clinton: He clearly knows who his friends are.

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A *Vast Conspiracy* by Jeffrey Toobin tells the story of 1998 just the way Clinton likes it. Even better, from the Clintonite point of view, is *The Hunting of the President* by Joe Conason and Gene Lyons. It's hard to say who were the greatest Clinton apologists of the entire impeachment drama, but Conason and Lyons would be hard to beat. The work of these two columnists could hardly be distinguished from the machinations of Sidney Blumenthal, one of Clinton's most poisonous aides. In fact, it was, to a large degree, the same work.

So, we have a crying need: for a book that will set the record straight; that will lay out the facts in a sober, unsensational manner, free of cant and spin; that will disperse some of the fog. That book, thankfully, has arrived. It is *The Truth at Any Cost: Ken Starr and the Unmaking of Bill Clinton* by Susan Schmidt and Michael Weisskopf. This is the book that the White House has feared, and will do everything in its power to discredit. It is a blow to Clintonian revisionism, or fictionalizing. It is an antidote to Toobin, Conason, Lyons, and the rest of that claque. Because it is a true book, coming amid a sea of lies, it is a necessary book. Also an enormously gratifying one.

Susan Schmidt is a reporter for the *Washington Post*, Michael Weisskopf a reporter for *Time*. They were among the handful of journalists in Washington who went hard after the truth of the Lewinsky story, refusing to be intimidated by the White House or by their skeptical or embarrassed peers. Others in this group included Michael Isikoff of *Newsweek*, Lisa Myers of NBC, and Jackie Judd of ABC. These reporters were hardly political partisans; chances are, none was a registered Republican. But they were professionals. For their efforts, Blumenthal labeled them "assets of the enemy." The White House constantly railed at them, or whispered about them, tagging them as biased or out of step with their colleagues. (This last bit, sadly, was true.)

The Schmidt/Weisskopf book contains many new details, some of which have received attention in the press. The Starr team came very close to indicting Mrs. Clinton for Whitewater; the death of a key witness, James McDougal, probably saved her. Clinton confessed his guilt to one of his "spiritual advisers" early on—some six months before his partial confession to the public. The Justice Department, represented by Janet Reno and her deputy Eric Holder, joined heartily in the campaign to undermine Starr, a duly appointed law officer of the government; Reno and Holder were no more honest in the Lewinsky matter than they have been in the Elián González affair. James Carville taped phone calls from tipsters claiming to have salacious information about Starr and his staff. And so on.

■

This is the book that the White House has feared, and will do everything in its power to discredit.

■

But what the book mainly does is remind us of what we already know. It memorializes between hard covers a year—1998—subject to endless myth and mischief. We remember the piles of hush money paid to Webb Hubbell. The dirty arts of the snoop Terry Lenzner, employed by the president of the

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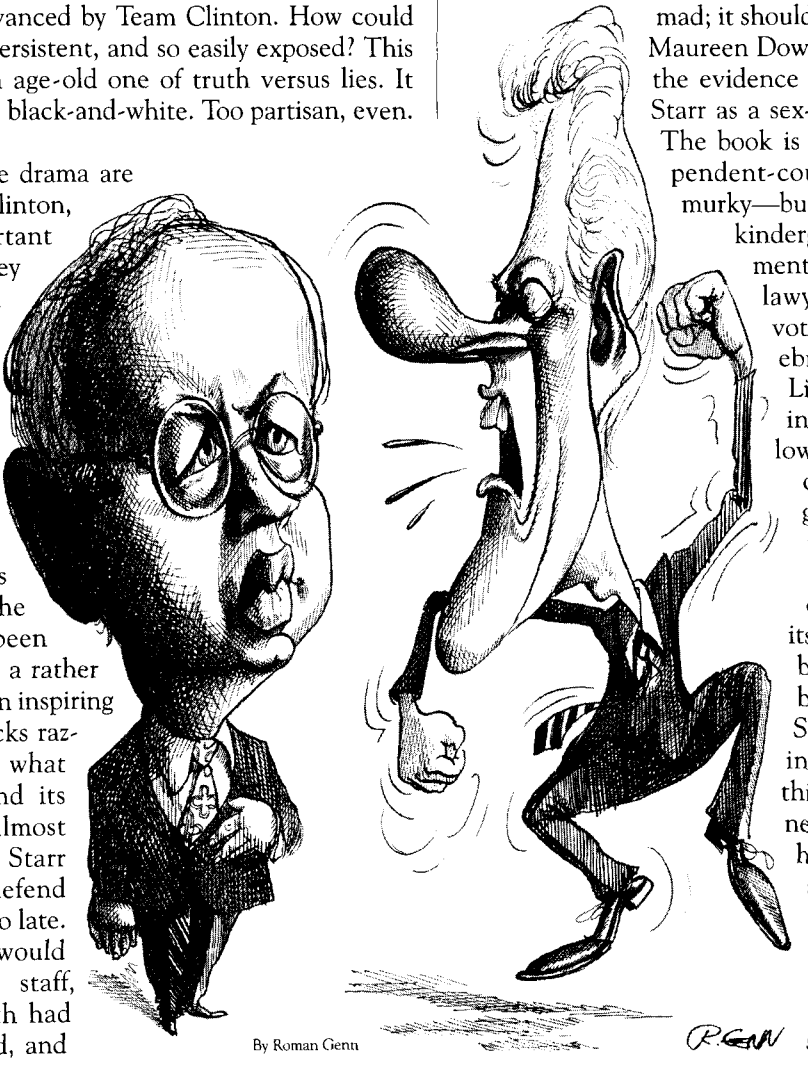
United States. The comical yet dangerous figure of William Ginsburg. The farce played out by Susan McDougal, who, in her prison suit and shackles, pretended that she was resisting pressure to make false statements against Clinton. Betty Currie, cowering in the midst of that press mob, burning an image of victimhood into the public mind—her lawyer had refused to let her leave by an underground exit, unnoticed. The "protective-function privilege," a novelty and crock, invented to keep Secret Service agents from testifying. The phony attempt to paint Starr's subpoena of receipts from a bookstore as an assault on the First Amendment. The stupid injection of race into the case: Will it be the D.C. jury or the Virginia one? And the awful mendacity of Steven Brill, who launched his magazine with an article that almost ruined the independent counsel. The article was grossly untrue—in a magazine devoted to policing the media for accuracy and fairness.

Above all, we remember the lies, reeking on nearly every page, coming from almost everyone on the Clinton side: the president himself, of course, and his wife. Then Currie, Vernon Jordan, Paul Begala, and a hundred others. Let's not forget the ex-intern herself. It's easy to dismiss Monica as a hapless Valley Girl, caught in a situation beyond her maturity. In this book, however, she comes off as far more shrewd, manipulative, and venal. The reader nearly suffocates from the volume of lies advanced by Team Clinton. How could there be so many, so persistent, and so easily exposed? This story, ultimately, is an age-old one of truth versus lies. It seems too simple—too black-and-white. Too partisan, even. But there it is.

At the center of the drama are two men, Starr and Clinton, alike in no important respects. "Although they were both trained in the law," write the authors, "it was as if they had apprenticed on different planets." Starr had "a nearly religious reverence for the rule of law"; Clinton, not. One effect of this book is to remove the horns that have been placed on Starr. He is a rather inspiring figure, with an inspiring life story, even if it lacks razzle-dazzle. To revisit what the White House and its allies did to him is almost traumatizing. But Starr steadily refused to defend himself, until it was too late. "Facts and law," he would tell his exasperated staff, "facts and law." Truth had always been his friend, and it would out. Decent-minded people would be grateful for his efforts. From his parents and church, he had learned to "set your face against the popular mood." And when he met the force and forces of Bill Clinton, he got clobbered. Referring to the polls, one of Clinton's aides exulted, "He's down in Gingrichland!"

Repeatedly, Starr's sensitivity to the president allowed Clinton to slip the noose. Starr declined to subpoena Clinton early, instead issuing six invitations to him, trying to entice him to speak voluntarily. Starr thought that the president was in a terrible bind, and—if you can believe it, and you should—sympathized with him. Clinton held off, giving himself time to learn what others were saying, which enabled him to shape his lies just so. If Starr had kept The Dress and its fateful evidence to himself, Clinton's perjury before the grand jury would have been even more flagrant; but Starr, thinking it only fair, tipped him off. A funny creature, Starr. He forbade those in his office to refer to Clinton as anything but "the president" or "Mr. Clinton." The authors say that the White House viewed Starr as "totally out of step with modern society." Is that right? Maybe so. Starr, given his religious views, wouldn't mind—"Come out from the world and be separate," etc. But then, Starr had what turned out to be a very worldly job.



By Roman Genn

This book will make ordinary readers mad; it should make others ashamed. How Maureen Dowd, for example, can confront the evidence in this book and still damn Starr as a sex-craved pervert is a mystery. The book is plenty sophisticated—independent-counsel territory can be murky—but it also reminds us of some kindergarten lessons about government. At one point, one of Starr's lawyers, Stephen Binhak (who voted for Clinton twice and celebrated the 1992 victory in Little Rock), said the following about Paula Jones: "The lowliest person in the country can sue the most exalted and get a fair day in court. That's what this is all about."

The Clinton fog machine, of course, will continue to do its work. But at least there will be this book—something to brandish, a resource to trust. Schmidt and Weisskopf have indeed gone "over and over this." Others will now have less need to do so. It certainly won't help the authors to be praised and thanked in NATIONAL REVIEW. But they have proven that journalists, especially when they are most needed, can be public servants, too. **NR**

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Through His Teeth

Quotations from Chairman Gore

JOHN J. MILLER

"There has never been a time in this campaign when I have said something that I know to be untrue."
—Vice President Al Gore, January 26, 2000

By now, pretty much everyone recognizes that Vice President Gore has a problem with the truth. In April, a pair of *Boston Globe* reporters wrote, "Gore has regularly promoted himself, and skewered his opponents, with embroidered, misleading, and occasionally false statements to a degree that even some of his allies concede is rare for a politician of his stature." That observation is hardly new. Twelve years ago, Michael Dukakis, campaigning for president against Gore, urged him: "Please get your facts straight. If you're going to be president of the United States, you'd better be accurate." Around the same time, Gore's communications director, Arlie Schardt, warned his boss in a memo: "Your main pitfall is exaggeration." Press secretary Mike Kopp once counseled Gore against "remarks that may be impossible to back up."

Now that Gore is the Democratic party's crown prince, Dukakis isn't elaborating on his earlier comments, and Schardt is spinning his away (no word from Kopp). But the impression remains: Al Gore is a liar. Bill Bradley said as much in one of their debates, when he asked Gore: "Why should we believe that you will tell the truth as president if you don't tell the truth as a candidate?"

Still, Gore allies are now hitting back. *The Washington Monthly* recently featured the vice president in a cover story entitled "He's No Pinocchio." Author Robert Parry blamed journalists for "publishing outright falsehoods about Gore." Mickey Kaus, a media reporter who is no Gore sycophant, also analyzed Gore's statements. He found only ten worthy of review, and rated a mere four of them as inexcusable lies. In a *George* magazine piece headed "Will the Biggest Liar Win?" Peter Keating suggested that Gore is no worse than George W. Bush—or any other pol, for that matter—in the truth-telling department.

We decided to perform our own assessment of Gore's veracity and came up with the following list of about 30 lies (or, if you like your language softer, untruths). To make the cut, each Gore tale had to meet two essential criteria. First, it had to be a clear, documented statement by Gore. Campaign ads count, on the assumption that he helped create them. Statements by Gore aides don't count, because Gore can't always control what comes out of their mouths, even when the lie looks like part of an overall strategy. So when Gore staffers told reporters earlier this year that the vice president wouldn't be meeting with Al

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Sharpton on the morning the two did meet secretly, Gore gets a pass. Yes, it was a lie. But by our strict standards, it was not a Gore lie.

Second, a lie must be an intentional deception. Gore has said many things he probably doesn't believe—Bill Clinton "will be regarded in the history books as one of our greatest presidents," to pick one example. But that's really an opinion, and an expression of rah-rah loyalty, so Gore again gets a pass.

Here, then, the list, in reverse chronological order:

TOBACCO #1

March 1, 2000; *San Jose Mercury News*

CLAIM: "It's not fair to say, 'Okay, after his sister died, he continued in the same relationship with the tobacco industry.' I did not. I did not. I began to confront them forcefully. I don't see the inconsistency there."

TRUTH: The same month Gore's sister died in 1984, he received a $1,000 speaking fee from U.S. Tobacco. The next year, he voted against cigarette and tobacco tax increases three times and favored a bill allowing major cigarette makers to purchase discounted tobacco. In the 1988 campaign, Gore bragged of his tobacco background: "I want you to know that with my own hands, all of my life, I put [tobacco] in the plant beds and transferred it. I've hoed it, I've dug in it, I've sprayed it, I've chopped it, I've shredded it, spiked it, put it in the barn, and stripped it and sold it" (*Newsday*, 2-26-88).

By David Smith

TOBACCO #2

March 1, 2000; *San Jose Mercury News*

CLAIM: "My family had grown tobacco. It was never actually grown on my farm, but it was on my father's farm."

TRUTH: Gore had already admitted growing tobacco on his own farm: "On my farm, we stopped growing tobacco some time after Nancy died" (Cox News Service, 4-26-99). Also, Gore received federal subsidies for growing tobacco on his farm (*Wall Street Journal*, 8-10-95).

ABORTION #1

February 20, 2000; *New York Times*

CLAIM: Gore said he has "always, always, always" supported *Roe v. Wade*.

TRUTH: In 1977, Rep. Gore voted for the Hyde Amendment, which says that abortion "takes the life of an unborn child who is a living human being," and that there is no constitutional right to abortion. He cast many other votes favorable to the pro-life cause and earned an 84 percent rating from the National Right to Life Committee.

CROWD ESTIMATE

February 4, 2000; *New York Times*

CLAIM: "We had a huge event with 3,000 people at Ohio State University."

TRUTH: "Officials at that rally said the room where it had taken place did not hold more than 1,200 people, and, given the area needed for the staging erected for the occasion, they estimated the crowd at 500," reported the *Times*.

NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY

February 2, 2000; *Good Morning America*

CLAIM: "We won in every single demographic category" in the New Hampshire primary.

TRUTH: Bill Bradley carried male voters and voters aged 18–29, according to exit polls.

BRADLEY VOTING RECORD

January 8, 2000; Democratic debate in Iowa

CLAIM: "Why did you [Bill Bradley] vote against the disaster relief for Chris Peterson when he and thousands of other farmers here in Iowa needed it after those '93 floods?"

TRUTH: Bradley voted for $4.8 billion in flood aid and opposed an amendment, also opposed by the Clinton White House until the last minute, to add $900 million in disaster compensation.

HUBERT HUMPHREY

December 27, 1999; *Washington Post*

CLAIM: Gore has suggested that he contributed important lines to Hubert Humphrey's acceptance speech at the 1968 Democratic convention. "Young Gore later often told the story . . . [A]s [he] sat in the convention hall and looked up at Humphrey in the spotlight, he thought he heard his own words coming back to him."

TRUTH: When Gore's supposed conduit to Humphrey denied the influence, Gore blamed his recollection on "Faulty memory. Faulty memory."

RESIDENCE

December 23, 1999; ABCNews.com

CLAIM: "I live on a farm today. I have my heart in my own farm."

TRUTH: Gore lives in the vice-presidential mansion at the Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C. After making this farm claim, Gore said: "Yes, I live in Washington, D.C., when I'm working there"!

INTERNET PROTECTION

December 17, 1999; Democratic debate on *Nightline*

CLAIM: "I helped to negotiate an agreement with the Internet service providers to put a parent-protection page up and give parents the ability to click on all the websites that their children have visited lately. That'll put a lot of bargaining leverage in the hands of parents."

TRUTH: Bartlett Cleland of the Internet Education Foundation, seven months earlier: "There was no Gore involvement. They hijacked this issue. He makes it sound like he led the project. I can't imagine what he will invent tomorrow" (*Washington Times*, 5-6-99).

LOVE CANAL

December 1, 1999; Concord High School, Concord, N.H.

CLAIM: "I found a little place in upstate New York called Love

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Canal. I had the first hearing on that issue."
TRUTH: In October 1978, Gore did hold congressional hearings on Love Canal—which he apparently "found" two months after President Carter declared it a disaster area and the federal government offered to buy the homes.

HOME BUILDER
November 30, 1999; New England Business Council, Manchester, N.H.
CLAIM: "I was a home builder after I came back from Vietnam. . . . I know a good bit about how to make money that way. . . . To build this country is a great thing."
TRUTH: A Gore family corporation, Tanglewood Homebuilders, built nine houses between 1969 and 1973 on property once owned by Gore's father. "I believe he [Al Gore Jr.] came by a time or two, but not too often," Jewell Dillehay, the contractor for the development, told the *Orange County Register* on February 20, 1988.

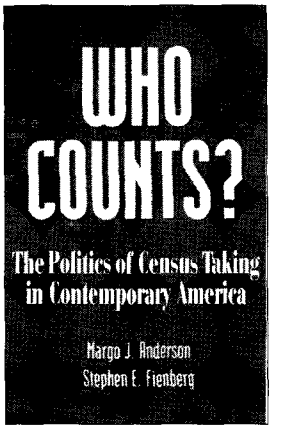
MCCAIN-FEINGOLD CAMPAIGN-FINANCE BILL
November 24, 1999; *New York Times*
CLAIM: "Unlike Senator Bradley, I was a cosponsor of it."
TRUTH: Gore and Russell Feingold never served together in the Senate. Gore later admitted to the *Times* that his comment "was a mistake . . . [W]hat I meant to say was that I supported that."

EITC
November 1, 1999; *Time* interview
CLAIM: "I was the author of that proposal [the Earned Income Tax Credit]. I wrote that, so I say [to Bill Bradley], Welcome aboard. That is something for which I have been the principal proponent for a long time."
TRUTH: The original EITC law was enacted in 1975. Gore entered Congress in 1977.

STIFF AND WOODEN
October 23, 1999; Associated Press
CLAIM: "I never got that stiff-and-wooden rap in the House and Senate. It has been as vice president."
TRUTH: *Time*, March 21, 1988: "A joke among the press corps is, How do you tell Al Gore from his Secret Service protection? Answer: He's the stiff one."

VIETNAM SERVICE
October 15, 1999; *Los Angeles Times*
CLAIM: "I carried an M-16. . . . I pulled my turn on the perimeter at night and walked through the elephant grass, and I was fired upon." In 1988, Gore told the *Washington Post*: "I was shot at. . . . I spent most of my time in the field."
TRUTH: Gore never faced direct enemy fire, although several times he may have arrived on the scene shortly after fighting was completed.

TEST-BAN TREATY
October 14, 1999; Gore ad
CLAIM: "I ask for your support, and your mandate if elected president, to send this treaty back to the Senate with your demand that they ratify it. I've worked on this for 20 years because, unless we get this one right, nothing else matters."
TRUTH: Gore indeed "worked on" this matter for many years, but often in opposition to a test ban. During his presidential campaign in 1988, he criticized his Democratic primary opponents for "the very idea of having a complete ban on all flight-testing of missiles when we rely on deterrence for the survival of our civilization" (*Washington Post*, 2-22-88).



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INTERNET
March 9, 1999; CNN interview
CLAIM: "During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet."
TRUTH: The Internet is an outgrowth of a Pentagon program established in 1969. In the 1980s, Gore supported legislation considered favorable to the Internet's development.

CENSUS
July 16, 1998; NAACP annual convention
CLAIM: "The Republicans know theirs is the wrong agenda for African Americans. They don't even want to count you in the census!"
TRUTH: Most Republicans opposed the Clinton administration's plan to conduct the census by statistically sampling the population rather than actually trying to count everybody.

BUDDHIST TEMPLE
January 24, 1997; *Today* show
CLAIM: "I did not know that it was a fundraiser."
TRUTH: A DNC memo prepared for Gore made plain that the event at Hsi Lai Temple in Hacienda Heights, Calif., was a fundraiser. A Secret Service document called it a fundraiser, Gore's staff described the event as a fundraiser to reporters, and DNC chairman Don Fowler testified to the Senate that he knew "there was a fundraising aspect to this event." Six weeks before attending the event, Gore met with temple master Hsing Yun at the White House with fundraisers Maria Hsia and John Huang. Later that day, Gore sent an e-mail saying that he couldn't be in New York on April 28, 1996: "If we have already booked the fundraisers [in California], then we have to decline."

ABORTION #2
January 22, 1997; NARAL meeting
CLAIM: "I reached out to individuals who are leaders on the [pro-life] side of this issue" to "make common cause" on reducing unwanted pregnancies. He went on to imply that Catholic pro-lifers' opposition to birth control made it impossible for both sides join "together to make abortions rare."
TRUTH: Despite many queries, no pro-life leader has ever said Gore approached him on this subject.

PEACE CORPS
February 16, 1992; C-SPAN's *Booknotes*
CLAIM: Gore said his sister was "the very first volunteer for the Peace Corps."
TRUTH: Nancy Gore Hunger was a paid employee at Peace Corps headquarters, 1961–64.

SUPERFUND
April 16, 1988; Democratic debate in New York
CLAIM: "I have written the law, along with one other principal author of the Superfund law, and amendments to the other major law in this area, which requires that companies improperly disposing of hazardous waste must bear the financial consequences of cleaning it up."
TRUTH: Rep. Jim Florio, Democrat of New Jersey, wrote the first Superfund law in 1980. Gore was not a coauthor but merely one of 42 cosponsors in the House. Eight years before claiming authorship and praising the Superfund law, Gore criticized it for being "far too small to make a reasonable start on correcting this enormous environmental problem" (Congressional Record, 5-16-80).

HOMETOWN
February 1988; two ads
CLAIM: "I'm Al Gore. I grew up on a farm," and "growing up in Carthage, Tennessee, I learned our bedrock values . . ."
TRUTH: Gore, the son of a senator, grew up primarily at the Fairfax Hotel in Washington, D.C., in a suite of rooms overlooking Embassy Row. He graduated from the ritzy St. Albans National Cathedral School, also in the capital.

SCHOOL DAYS
1988 campaign video
CLAIM: Narrator calls him a "brilliant student."
TRUTH: "His grades were uneven, never approaching the plateau of A's and B's that might be expected of one who possesses such a pedagogical demeanor," reported the *Washington Post* (3-19-00).

MUSIC LYRICS
November 3, 1987; *Variety*
CLAIM: "I was not in favor of the hearing" on music lyrics.
TRUTH: At the Senate Commerce Committee hearing on September 19, 1985, Gore said: "Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank you and commend you for calling this hearing. Because my wife has been heavily involved in the evolution of this issue, I have gained quite a bit of familiarity with it, and I have really gained an education in what is involved."

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER
September 27, 1987; *Des Moines Register*
CLAIM: Gore claimed he "got a bunch of people indicted and sent to jail" as a reporter in the 1970s.
TRUTH: Two city councilmen were indicted; one was acquitted and the other given a suspended sentence. In an interview with the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* (10-3-87) a few days later, Gore admitted to "a careless statement that was unintentional."

FEMALE STAFFERS
August 22, 1987; Associated Press
CLAIM: Gore "said half his campaign staff were women, and he would make half of a Gore Cabinet women."
TRUTH: "But pressed by reporters later to name women on his staff, he fumbled and then mentioned one name, which later turned out to be incorrect."

ARMS CONTROL
1984 Senate ad
CLAIM: Narrator says Gore "wrote the bipartisan plan on arms control that U.S. negotiators will take to the Russians."
TRUTH: Ken Adelman, director of U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency: "He had nothing to do with what we proposed to the Soviets" (*Boston Globe*, 4-11-00). **NR**

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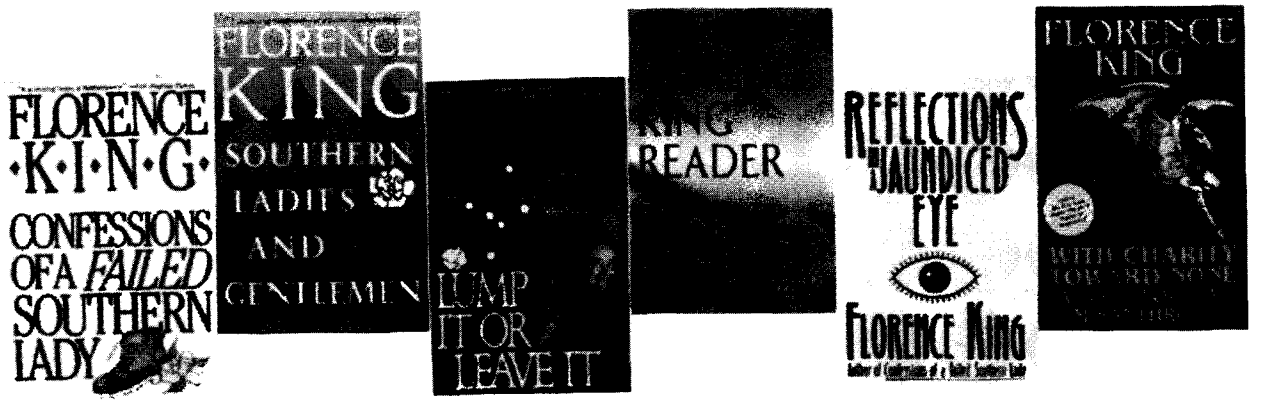

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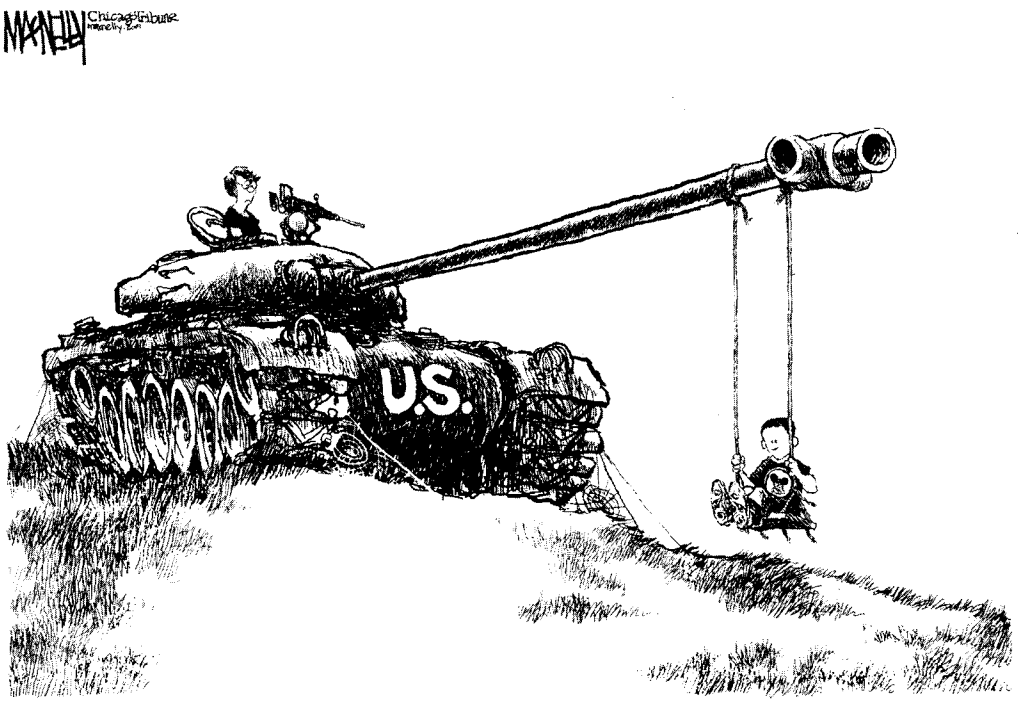

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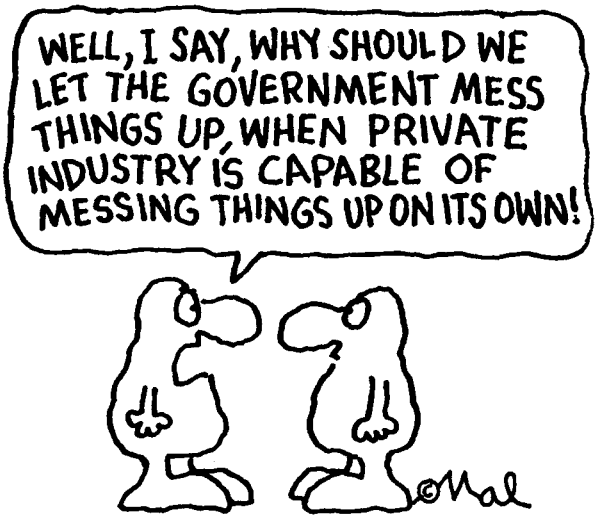
"You'd be short-tempered too if the AMA had you on probation!"


WELL, I SAY, WHY SHOULD WE LET THE GOVERNMENT MESS THINGS UP, WHEN PRIVATE INDUSTRY IS CAPABLE OF MESSING THINGS UP ON ITS OWN!
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Barzun's Summa

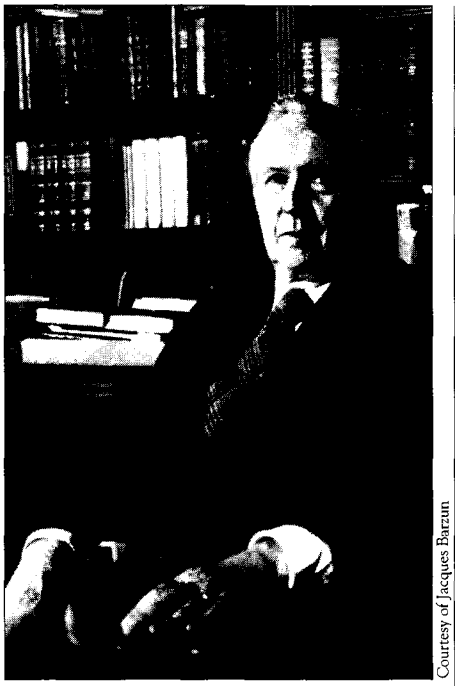
JEFFREY HART

From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life: 1500 to the Present, by Jacques Barzun (HarperCollins, 877 pp., $36)

BORN in France in 1907, coming to the U.S. in 1920, Jacques Barzun has written some 30 books of lasting value. For many years he was a preeminent professor at Columbia University, and, for a decade, while Seth Low Professor of History, also Dean of the Faculties and Provost. During these years no one in American higher education was more distinguished. All of his Columbia students over the decades know him as a patient teacher who embodies the highest intellectual standards.

So now we have this comprehensive argument and summing up. How many times in one's life does one get to welcome a masterpiece, which, without a doubt, this amazing work certainly is? It is so lucid that its 800 pages of text move quickly. With seeming ease, its architecture covers 500 years of Western history, the large movement of the book, and at the same time fills in the great sweep with a richness of detail that gives concrete life to the vast design. Among the particulars there are constant surprises, as in the detail of a Gothic cathedral. The intellectual clarifications come one after the other.

Great historical writing always possesses greatness of style. This book, among the modern historians, and in terms of the historian's art, belongs with Voltaire on Louis XIV, with Gibbon, Macaulay, Burckhardt, Ranke, Huizinga. Barzun's prose is fully up to the occasion. "I have tried to write as I might speak, with only a touch of pedantry here and there to show that I understand modern tastes."



Courtesy of Jacques Barzun

Columbia University sage Jacques Barzun

Barzun practices "cultural history," which has no connection with the crybaby "Cultural Studies" that now wastes the time of students with such detritus as *I, Rigoberta Menchu*. He sets out to trace in broad outline the evolution of art, science, religion, philosophy, and social thought during the last 500 years. "I hope to show that during this span the peoples of the West offered the world a set of ideas and institutions not found earlier or elsewhere." He makes it clear that he celebrates these distinctive achievements. He believes that the West has pursued these characteristic purposes, carried them "to their utmost possibility," and in so doing brought about decline and decadence. Barzun is a "cultural" historian because, in his narrative, intellectual developments are in the foreground, though his cultural tapestry is stitched onto a canvas of political, military, and economic history.

Here then is his large organization of the cultural history of the last 500 years: "Three spans, each of approximately 125 years, take us, roughly speaking, from Luther to Newton, from Louis XIV to the guillotine, and from Goethe to the New York Armory Show [1913]. The fourth and last span"—decadence—"deals with the rest of our century." Accompanying all this has been the spectacular development of science and technology.

Barzun is able to make this periodization plausible, and descends from its grand sweep to the rich particulars I have mentioned. Prominent among these is a series of "mini-biographies" of major figures, brought off with concentration and éclat. I will not list all 45, but skip forward from first to last: Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Petrarch, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Tasso, Bacon, Pascal, Machiavelli, Cromwell, Swift, Molière, Diderot, Rousseau, Bach, Goethe, Mozart, Berlioz, Hazlitt, Florence Nightingale, Walter Bagehot, Samuel Butler, Shaw. If all 45 of these mini-biographies were published together they would make a fine small volume.

Two design devices here work splendidly, adding additional pleasure to a very long book. Throughout, apt quotations from people under discussion are given in small indented boxes alongside the larger text. These are chosen with great care to illuminate the accompanying discussion. And where "further reading" is concerned, we do not get a massive list at the end, but, in brackets throughout the text, tips on what else to look into.

Then there are countless great individual passages. Did you suppose that Queen Elizabeth I could not possibly have resembled the lady in those portraits? Revise your impression:

> For strange as it may seem, humanism, for all its love of the natural, did nothing to keep the human face from being heavily painted. Some men and all self-

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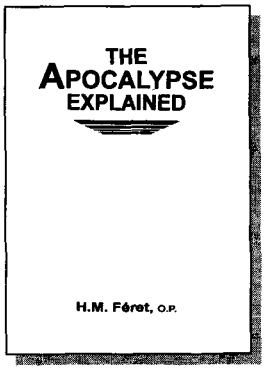

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respecting women other than the lowly or rural applied thick coats of color and varnish to their features. Elizabeth of England and her ladies in waiting (we are told) put on a mixture of mashed apples (whence the word *pomade*), rose water, and hog's fat. But as the queen wanted her face to be perfectly white, it would seem that chalk was used as the overriding ingredient of the compost. She could test its effect with the aid of a new device, the mirror as we know it, made of clear glass with a backing. She completed her improvement on nature by dying her hair red (later wearing a wig to the same effect), and plucking her eyebrows out of existence: Nobody could catch her looking surprised—it was her permanent expression, and no doubt an asset to any ruler and especially to one trying to be absolute.

And on a still smaller scale are the many *aperçus*, never as cynical as La Rochefoucauld, but full of civilized, worldly good sense.

Except among those whose education has been in the minimalist style, it is understood that hasty moral judgments about the past are a form of injustice.

In the United States at the present time the workings of "political correctness" in universities and the speech police that punishes persons and corporations for words on certain topics quaintly called "sensitive" are manifestations of the permanent spirit of inquisition.

Revolutions paradoxically begin by promising freedom and then turn coercive and "puritanical," to save themselves from both discredit and reaction.

It is a fact of nature that people who are well fed and idle in the sense of free from steady work feel a restlessness that inevitably turns amorous.

From such delights, let us turn to the large structure. The four great Western revolutions were the religious (Reformation), the monarchical (nation-state), the liberal (individualism), and the social (the welfare state). The last involved the "Big Switch" from 19th-century liberal individualism to 20th-century collectivism in its varying degrees of coercion and comprehensiveness. (No advanced nation rejects all versions of the welfare state.)

But after that came decadence. Barzun does not use this term as an epithet, but descriptively. He thus sees the turn of the 15th century as the decadence of the Middle Ages: "When people accept futility and the absurd as normal, the culture is decadent. The term is not a slur; it is a technical label. A decadent culture offers opportunities chiefly to the satirist, and the turn of the 15C had a good many, one of them a great one: Erasmus."

There then follows the 500 years of extraordinary creativity beginning in 1500. This phase of culture represents purposes that "carried out to their utmost possibility, are bringing about its demise." Barzun discerns a brilliant period of creativity around the turn of the 20th century. Then came the catalyst that accelerated and intensified the tendencies leading to decadence: a sense of futility and absurdity, constructivism becoming destructivism: "The blow that hurled the modern world on its course of self-destruction was the Great War of 1914–1918." There resulted a collapse of manners and authority, statesmen now called Tony and Bill, anti-heroes and anti-art, the ridicule of anything established, the distortions of language and objects, the indifference to clear meaning, the violence to the human form, the return to primitive elements of sensation. "The root principle is 'Expect nothing.'"

These current and recognizable phenomena Barzun describes mordantly. And it is possible that he is right in thinking the slide into decadence terminal. Yet one reflects that in 1954 he published a notable book entitled *God's Country and Mine*, a celebration of the America of the period following World War II, and another notable book in 1959 entitled *The House of Intellect*, reflecting the great universities I can recall from that period.

We must also consider that the United States has had the resiliency to put together an alliance that won World War II and the Cold War, really World War III, and defeated totalitarianism. It now stands supreme in wealth and power. The decadence must be partial and perhaps temporary. No doubt the Great War was the catastrophe Barzun describes. But there seems to have been a recovery, and it is possible that the decadence he now decries is more immediately a product of the '60s, and began in the universities. Indeed, Jacques Barzun's book in itself is grounds for hope. No period is entirely decadent in which such a book could appear. **NR**

Blood at the Root

PETE HAMILL

Strange Fruit: Billie Holiday, Café Society, and an Early Cry for Civil Rights, by David Margolick (Running Press, 160 pp., $16.95)

THIS small book is the story of a disturbing American song and the African-American woman who owned it. The aesthetic premise is beyond dispute: "Strange Fruit" belonged to Billie Holiday. She did not write a word of the lyrics. Some of those who were present in 1939, when she and the song came together, believe she did not at first know what the lyrics meant. But the song became her professional and emotional property for the rest of her life. The subject, of course, was lynching.

Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root.
Black body swinging in the southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees...

More than 60 years later, in a very different America from the one that inspired them, those lyrics retain a chilling, poetic bluntness. They were not written, and were never performed, simply to entertain. Nobody sat at a piano in the Brill Building and concocted "Strange Fruit" in hope of a hit. The song came out of the injuries of the real world, not the need to create romantic illusions, and it was intended to provoke a social and political reaction. That made it a form of agitprop, of course, but it was agitprop on a very

Mr. Hamill is author most recently of *Why Sinatra Matters* and *Diego Rivera*.

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high level. Listen to "Strange Fruit" today, in any of the six versions recorded by Billie Holiday, and you know this is not a musical cartoon out of the *New Masses*.

The song's context was genuine. In the decades before World War II, lynchings were very real indeed. David Margolick, a staff writer for *Vanity Fair* (where the substance of the book first appeared) cites a study by the Tuskegee Institute, whose "conservative figures" showed that from 1889 to 1940, 3,833 human beings were lynched in the United States, 90 percent of them in the South. A fifth of those victims of

■

More than 60 years after they were written, Meeropol's lyrics retain a chilling, poetic bluntness.

■

vigilante "justice" were not black. This usually obscured fact was graphically reinforced by the show called *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*, mounted last year at the Roth Horowitz gallery and then moved to the New York Historical Society. In that collection of ghastly souvenir postcards, most lynching victims are black, but among those hanged from trees, shot, or burned alive by self-righteous vigilantes there are also Jews, Italians, and Latinos, along with women and girls. The lynch mobs—all those grinning and excited men, women, and children—are overwhelmingly white.

Pastoral scene of the gallant South,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh,
And the sudden smell of burning flesh . . .

It was a photograph that actually inspired the writing of the song, which began as a poem written by a New York man named Abel Meeropol (who later added the music). He was white, Jewish, a passionate sympathizer of the Old Left, and taught English for many years at DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx. He was a friend of Earl Robinson, who wrote "Ballad for Americans" (which became a Paul

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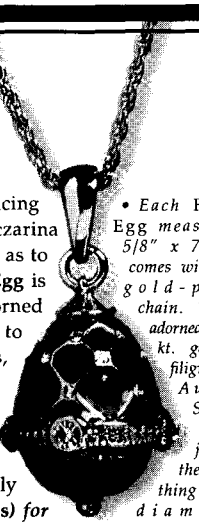

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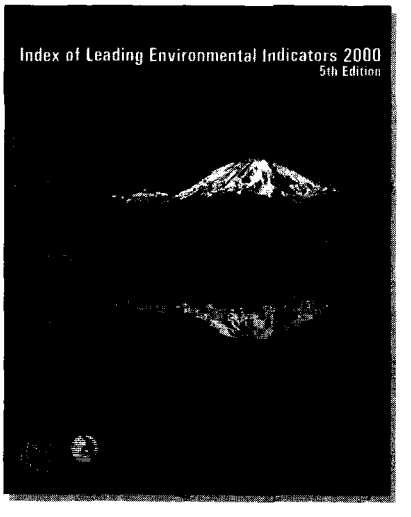

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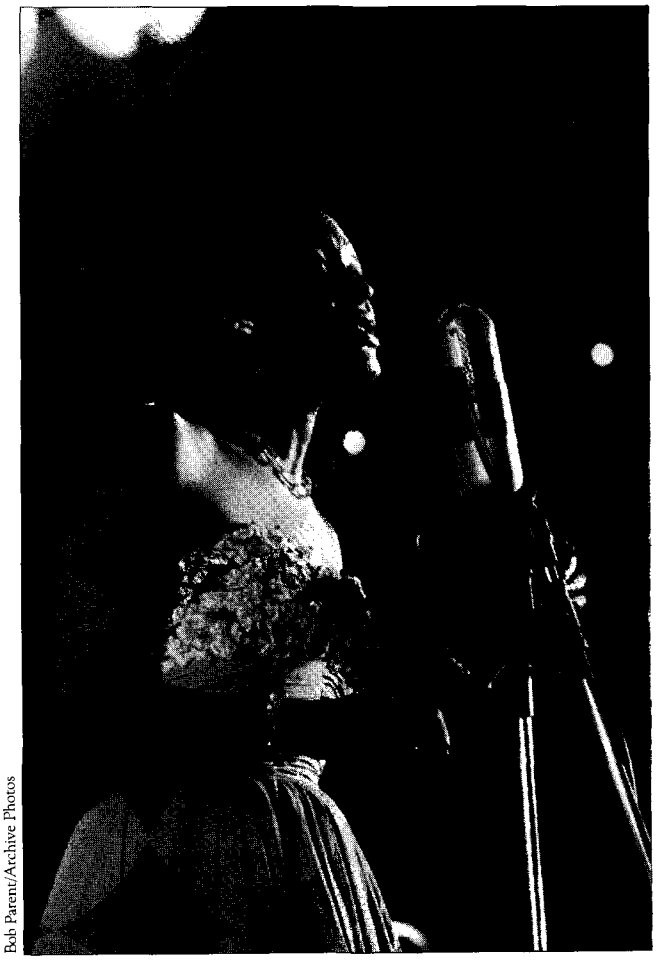
Robeson standard), and his own work was usually light and topical ("Swing Away with Daladier" and "The Chamberlain Crawl" have not survived as part of the canon of American popular music). Margolick explains that Meeropol used the nom de plume "Lewis Allan" for much of his extracurricular writing, combining the names of two of his children who died as infants. At some point in the early 1930s, Meeropol saw a photograph of a terrible lynching in a civil-rights magazine, was haunted by it, and expressed his anger in a poem. According to Margolick, the *New Masses* agreed in 1936 to publish the poem; but it actually first appeared in a union publication called *The New York Teacher*.

There is something of a political blur in Margolick's account of the Meeropol story. On page 33, Margolick writes of Meeropol: "He and his wife were closet Communists, donating a percentage of their earnings to the party (the FBI maintained that he had belonged only until 1947, though it continued to follow him for 23 years after that)." On page 70, Meeropol is called to testify before a 1941 state investigation of Communist subversion of New York public schools, and is asked whether the CP paid him to write "Strange Fruit." He says: "I have never done any work for the Communist Party, I have never been paid by the Communist Party, I have nothing to do with the Communist Party."

Margolick doesn't sort out this apparent contradiction, which in any event has little to do with the power of the song. But although "Lewis Allan" remains a vague credit line—even supposed by some musical analysts to be the name of a black man—the Meeropol name became better known in the mid 1950s, when he and his wife adopted the two young sons of the executed Soviet spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. By then, little remained of the passions of the 1930s, when Abel Meeropol's wife would sing "Strange Fruit" at small gatherings, and others (most notably a black singer named Laura Duncan) performed it at fundraisers for the Spanish Republic, all before Billie Holiday held the lyrics in her hands and asked what "pastoral" meant. But Barcelona fell; the purge trials exposed the horrors of Stalinism; the United States entered the war in 1941; the Depression finally ended. Meeropol left teaching, went to Hollywood to work as a writer from 1944 to 1952, "was apparently never blacklisted" (according to Margolick), and came back to New York to work in early television.

Everything faded away from those years when Meeropol was writing his topical poems and songs—except "Strange Fruit."



Bob Parent/Archive Photos

Billie Holiday at the New York Jazz Festival, 1957

Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop,
Here is a strange and a bitter crop.

Margolick's essay emphasizes the importance to American popular culture of Barney Josephson's Café Society, a Greenwich Village club that existed in ironic counterpoint to the uptown pretensions of the "exclusive" Stork Club and its dreadful owner and clientele.

■

Commodore Records released 'Strange Fruit' 16 years before Rosa Parks took her seat on that bus because her feet hurt.

■

Margolick doesn't explore the lowercase phenomenon of café society, when the children of the old rich began to merge with Hollywood celebrities. I wish he had. But in the end, only Café Society, the club, could have served as delivery room for "Strange Fruit." It's difficult to imagine the Duke and Duchess of Windsor listening to it at the Stork Club.

Many older Americans interviewed by Margolick remember being stunned when they first heard the song before the war, and this is the basis for a claim that it was a kind of curtain raiser to the civil-rights movement. This proposal strikes me as a bit shaky. To be sure, the Commodore Records single (with "Fine and Mellow" on the other side) was released eight years before Jackie Robinson integrated baseball, and therefore integrated the stands of ballparks; 16 years before Rosa Parks took her seat on that bus because her feet hurt. But the song was not a major hit, and the claim is bit extravagant. After all, most jazz, and all of the blues, could be described as a cry for civil rights, demanding, as all of Holiday's other work demanded, a recognition of individual humanity. "Strange Fruit" differs from jazz and the blues because it argues from the universal to the particular, while most African-American music (certainly not all) does exactly the opposite. Max Roach and other black musicians testify in Margolick's book to the

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powerful impact the song made on them when they were young. But there were a number of black Americans who hated it, including Robeson, who objected to blacks' being portrayed as victims, and the fine writer Albert Murray, who said: "Who the hell wants to go hear something that reminds them of a lynching?"

The song was not a commercial hit for several reasons, all related to its somber style and searing message. Most radio stations wouldn't play it, and it wasn't available on most Saturday-night jukeboxes. But for Billie Holiday, who was a very old 24-year-old when she recorded "Strange Fruit," the song became very important. As an interpreter of popular music, she had an extraordinary talent for digging her autobiography out of the work of other people; this was the part of Billie Holiday that was absorbed by Frank Sinatra, who was her exact contemporary. (They shared one other accident of biography: In 1945 Sinatra appeared in an Academy Award-winning short film about tolerance called *The House I Live In*. The title song, heavy with an admirable liberal message, was written by Meeropol.) Holiday could take the banal lyrics of Tin Pan Alley and infuse them with her own terrible experiences, her dark knowledge of men and drugs, racism and loneliness, and use an astringent irony to save them from syrupy sentimentality. She was a combination of deep feeling and great musical intelligence. The best of her work is full of rue, but no self-pity; it is urban, not rural; it contains some of the virtues of the stoic.

And yet it is hard to think of her music, and the dreadful dissipations of her heroin-poisoned later years, without thinking of "Strange Fruit." In many ways, that song provided the work with a center of gravity. Margolick does an admirable job of disentangling the myths Holiday wove about herself (most of them retailed in the wonderfully written "autobiography" she did with William Dufty). But in the mysterious ways of the genuine artist, Holiday managed to absorb a vast outer experience into her own life, using myth to give it meaning. When she sings, "here is a strange and a bitter crop," snapping off the final four-letter word as if wielding a whip, she could be speaking her own epitaph. **NR**

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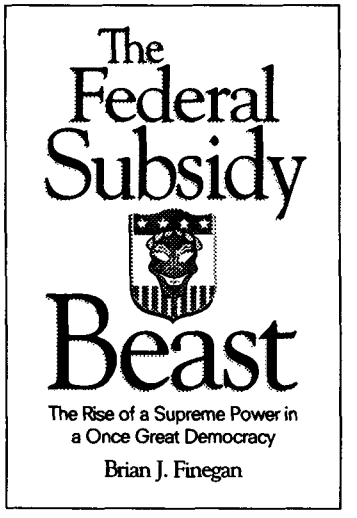

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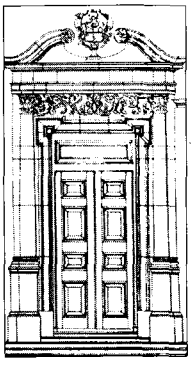
VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

MacArthur's War: Korea and the Undoing of an American Hero, by Stanley Weintraub (Free Press, 375 pp., $27.50)

"I WOULDN'T trade one Marshall for 50 MacArthurs," Dwight Eisenhower purportedly remarked. "My God!" he continued. "That would be a lousy deal. What would I do with 50 MacArthurs?"

There is an American tradition of producing great captains whose zeal for killing and skill in marshalling armies of vengeance often shock the very democratic citizenry that produced them. Yet often we have been saved by the brutality of war-lovers like George S. Patton and Curtis LeMay, who in the darkest hours of World War II proved themselves more deadly than the most lethal of our adversaries—even as we came to tire of their bombast and to feel uneasy with their uncouth love of battle in the unsettled and scary peace that followed.

It is tempting to see Douglas MacArthur as yet another of these Ajaxian heroes, who save us in moments of peril but are then unfairly caricatured, ridiculed, and ultimately discredited when the danger is past. But where men of iron and blood like Patton and LeMay were warriors first—and therefore honest in their discomfort with a complacent democratic society reluctant to pay the steep price of victory—Stanley Weintraub's MacArthur is a far more complex, duplicitous, and ultimately dangerous figure.



For Weintraub, professor emeritus of humanities at Pennsylvania State University and author of a number of influential studies of Victorian British literature, MacArthur was, first and foremost, the consummate politician who saw battle as a means to an end—mostly the enhancement of his own ego, ambition, and political agenda. Indeed, Weintraub argues that MacArthur often predicated his battlefield strategy on criteria other than military necessity—producing unneeded causalities in Korea and very nearly involving us in a huge and disastrous campaign that might have started World War III. In other words, Weintraub adopts the standard view of MacArthur that has emerged in the last three decades, albeit with a level of detail and often gossip—including tales of a seductive newspaper reporter, Maggie Higgins, shamelessly given free rein; the promotion of cronies; and publicity stunts that compromised military secrecy—that effectively belittles what legacy remains to the general.

Weintraub's account of MacArthur's meltdown begins in the days before the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, as the Hero of the Pacific is luxuriously ensconced as the proconsul of Japan, and ends with his unceremonious relief by Harry Truman in April 1951. MacArthur is depicted as vain, prone to dying his hair, eager to visit Korea mostly for photo-ops and the quick handing out of medals to officers, posturing and preening at the front while avoiding real risks. The general takes credit for the battlefield prowess of Matthew Ridgway, even as his obsequious staff in Tokyo deflects blame to subordinates and superiors alike when a quarter-million Chinese unexpectedly cross the Yalu River in November 1950 and nearly obliterate an American-led U.N. army on the verge of pushing the last Communist out of the Korean peninsula.

In his devastating portrayal of the aging general, Weintraub develops two themes. First, his MacArthur exhibits a predictable—and dangerous—modus operandi. While enjoying high society in peace, whether in Manila in 1940 or Tokyo a decade later, he loses touch with the realities of command and is deaf to the point of near-criminal negligence to clear warnings of enemy aggression. Fooled by court toadies and overly impressed with the ill-trained and poorly equipped troops at his command, he nearly allowed the Communists to drive the Americans out of Korea. Weintraub likens this lapse to MacArthur's failure to anticipate the surprise Japanese attack on the Philippines ten years earlier. In 1951, Weintraub argues, MacArthur's arrogance blinded him to the real danger that his army would be caught off guard by a Chinese invasion.

Repeatedly, Weintraub relates, MacArthur when surprised was almost paralyzed, only to become Olympian in victory—dangerously out of touch with battlefield reality in both his depression and ebullience. To be truly appreciated, then, MacArthur's tactical genius—the brilliant island-hopping campaigns of World War II that saved thousands of

■

Weintraub's MacArthur is dangerously out of touch with battlefield reality in both depression and ebullience.

■

American lives, the daring amphibious landing at Inchon in September 1950 that cut off the North Korean army and brought the Americans back to and beyond the 38th parallel—must be seen in the context of his earlier blunders. MacArthur's unexpected and ingenious offensives, Weintraub believes, were necessary correctives to his earlier negligence.

The book's second theme is even more disturbing. In Weintraub's eyes, MacArthur was not really involved with the Korean War per se. Actual battle operations are presented as irritants to MacArthur that threatened his two real obsessions: creating a modern democratic-capitalist state in Japan in his own image, and promoting Chiang Kai-shek's claims to the Chinese mainland. Weintraub repeatedly suggests that MacArthur deliberately misled the media, the Joint Chiefs, and the Truman administration in a sustained effort to draw us into a land war in Asia. His command center in Japan would then have served as a vast supply zone for American and National Chinese forces that would win back Korea and most of Manchuria in the bargain. The old

Mr. Hanson is author most recently of *The Soul of Battle* and *The Land Was Everything.*

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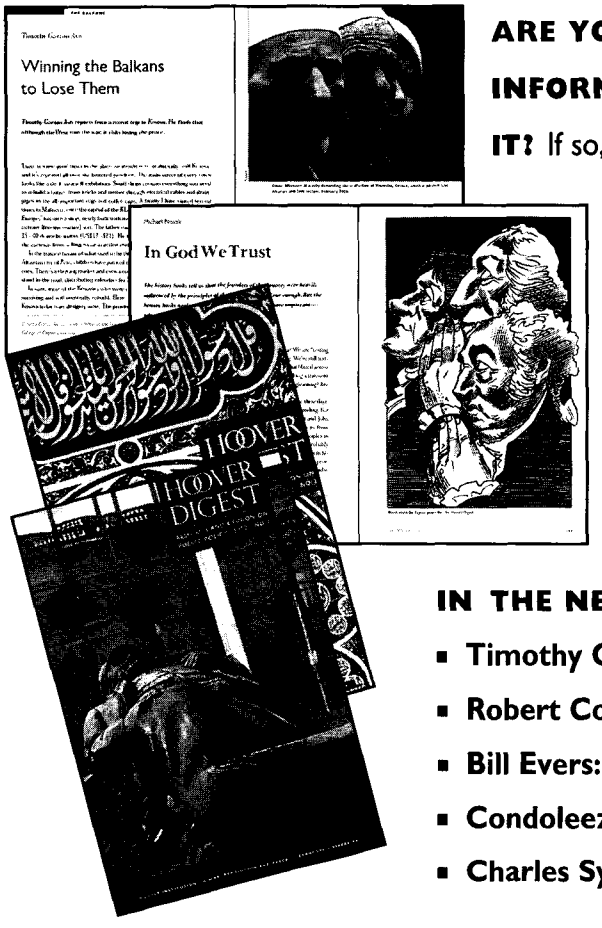

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charges about MacArthur—that he wished to bomb Manchuria, invade China with nationalist troops, use atomic weapons at will, salt the Chinese-Korean border with radioactive waste—are given new life in Weintraub's portrayal, against a background of constant personal pique at George Marshall, Harry Truman, and Dean Acheson.

Weintraub's obvious dislike of MacArthur does not alter the fact that on the basis of his communiqués and press releases alone the general was clearly insubordinate and deserved to be relieved. Weintraub quotes Truman frequently and to good effect: "If what MacArthur proposed had happened and had been allowed to take place, we would have wound up being at war not only with Red China but with Russia, too, and the consequences . . . might have meant the destruction of a good part of the world."

Still, damaging assertions by foes are repeated almost verbatim, and insignificant details emphasized, to stress MacArthur's pettiness and vanity—as if his private insecurities mattered much in an analysis of his military record. Plentiful detail is given about his digs at the Dai Ichi Building in Tokyo and the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, his carefully frayed cap, his masterly and deceitful prose that turned written communications into vehicles of personal invective, his tendency to term disastrous flight "strategic withdrawal" and to claim that unexpected advances were the result of carefully planned initiatives. At times Weintraub's voluminous store of negative anecdotes achieves the unintended effect of eliciting sympathy for MacArthur's evident frailty, especially when no quarter is given in light of the general's advanced age, previous brilliance in the Pacific, and unquestionable patriotism.

MacArthur's War touches on the newly released Soviet archives, but does not use those fascinating revelations to optimum effect—inasmuch as many of MacArthur's Cassandra-like warnings about Soviet involvement and the ultimate goals of Mao's Communists were, in fact, prescient. Thus we are not told to what degree this vainglorious and obnoxious general was nevertheless a visionary who understood the Communist agenda far better than his superiors, and astutely gauged the relative strategic impotence of both Russia and China vis-à-vis the United States in 1950. Much is made of the ill-preparedness of American troops and their lack of morale compared with Chinese esprit and tactical cohesion—but without enough acknowledgment that America was fighting an impossible war thousands of miles from home and with severe political restrictions against two Communist powers. And while there is a gripping account of MacArthur's armies racing up and down from Pusan to the Yalu in a terrifying war of mobility during his brief ten-month tenure, little is made of the gridlock after his removal, when for another two years thousands died in a war of stasis around the 38th parallel, with no hope of victo-

■ SHELF LIFE ■

In recent years, right-wing cultural commentary has been getting sadly predictable in both style and content. That's why Spence Publishing in Dallas deserves credit for producing surprising, provocative, and intellectually engaging works by cultural conservatives.

A fine recent example is *Shows About Nothing: Nihilism in Popular Culture from* The Exorcist *to* Seinfeld (192 pp., $22.95) by Thomas S. Hibbs. The author contends that in attacking the "liberalism" of TV and movies, conservatives are missing an important truth: that the nihilistic vision of, for example, *Seinfeld* is less an assault on conservative values than a rebellion against the spiritually unsatisfying liberalism of the 18th-century Enlightenment.

The excellence of Hibbs's book lies chiefly in the sensitivity with which it engages the cultural products it examines. Typically, cultural-analysis books of this type are written at the intellectual level of an op-ed; they list the number of gunshots, four-letter words, and sex scenes in a movie, describe them in gleeful detail, and then cluck about how filthy they are. Hibbs's project is a deeper one. He probes the works right down to their philosophical foundations. His critique of *The Exorcist* is a good example:—a key message of the film is that the facile rationalism of the Enlightenment is an inadequate weapon in the fundamental struggle of good against evil.

This is cultural analysis at a high level, and we need more of it.

Another new Spence book, *Monsters from the Id: The Rise of Horror in Fiction and Film* (336 pp., $27.95) by E. Michael Jones, is distinctive in a completely different way: the sheer outlandishness of its thesis. A commonplace observation about contemporary horror movies is that it's always the characters who have sex who end up being killed by the slasher. What's new about Jones's thesis is that he appears to believe that this is actually a good thing.

Jones contends that the movie monsters represent the repressed claims of the moral order. The Enlightenment rears its ugly head yet again, this time as unleasher of sexual liberation. Jones believes that in permitting people to have sex outside of marriage, the Enlightenment has transgressed a basic law of the human psyche and generates its own dark reaction of offended justice.

Now, if a liberal had written a book portraying Freddy Krueger as the defender of a good moral order, conservatives would be rushing to condemn the author as a demented quack; so I'm curious about how Jones's book will be received.

The typical reader, even as he dismisses Jones's thesis out of hand, will find all kinds of eyebrow-raising material in this book—about Illuminists, the Nazis' obsession with syphilis, cannibalism as a form of homosexuality (no, I'm not making this up; it's in the book), the rise of the porno industry, etc.

I learned from this book that the real name of porno actress Linda Lovelace was Linda Boreman. Which got me to thinking: Linda Boreman, the proto-porn star; Martin Bormann, the notorious Nazi; Frank Borman, the astronaut (participant in that ultra-Enlightenment project, the space program)—*all three are different versions of the same name*. Just a coincidence? A worthy subject for Jones's next investigation.

—Michael Potemra

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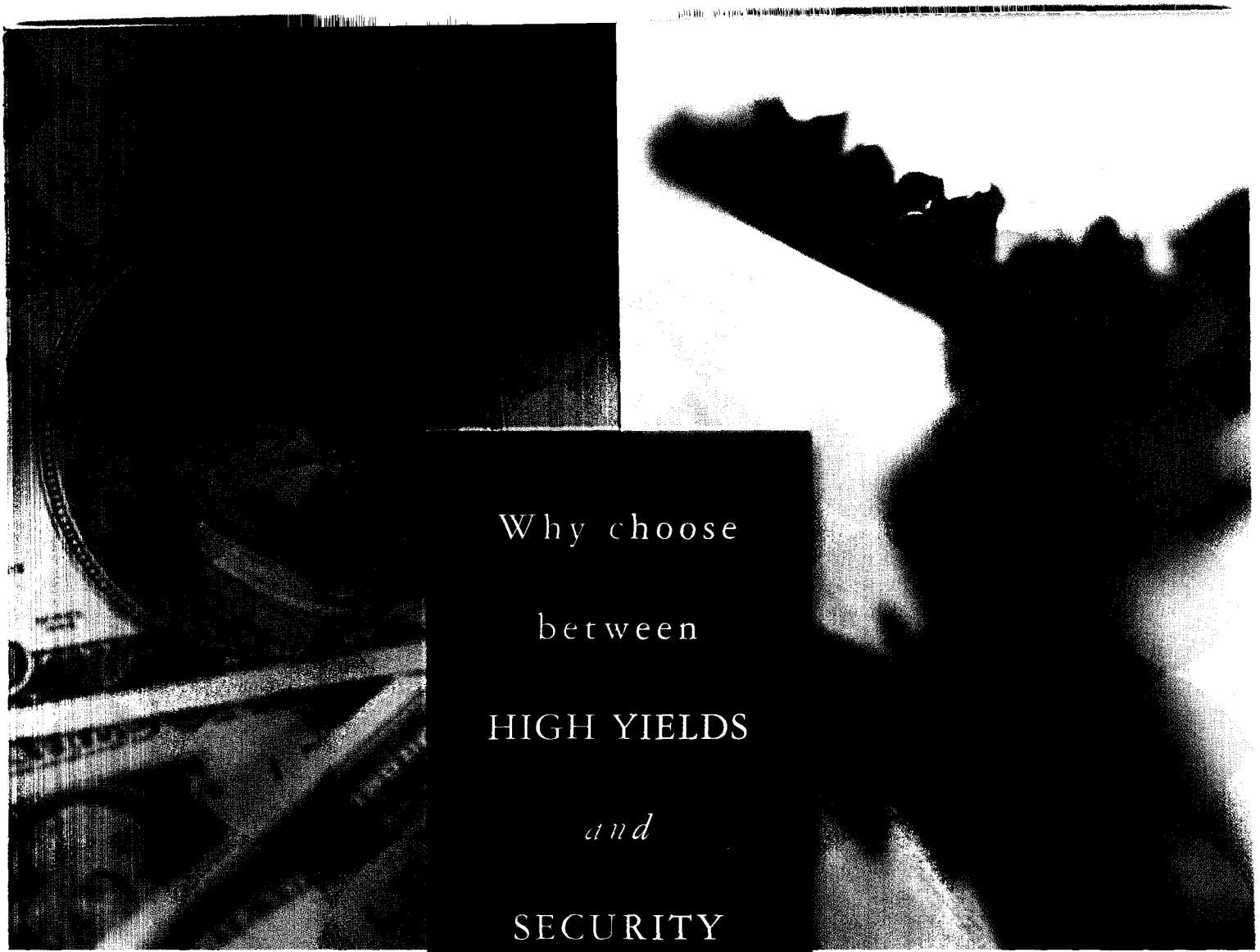

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ry and nearly all major decisions increasingly controlled from an equally blinkered Washington. Whatever we may think of MacArthur's brinkmanship, the disastrous later American strategy in Korea (and, for that matter, in Vietnam) was not part of his legacy.

In the end, what saves *MacArthur's War* from being a simple hatchet job are Weintraub's engaging story and his empathy for individual GIs. Weintraub himself was a veteran of that war and centers a great deal of his moving narrative on the hell they endured. MacArthur's petty infighting and staged events are therefore juxtaposed with horrific tales of American soldiers fighting, freezing, and dying in the worst imaginable circumstances. While much of MacArthur's staff luxuriated in Tokyo, thousands of American soldiers were casualties of atrocious winter weather in the passes of northern Korea. Thousands more, poorly clothed and hungry, faced Soviet-made tanks with ineffective weapons. Most were bewildered about the sudden turn of events after the Chinese surprise. Instead of enjoying the promised "Home for Christmas," they found themselves in yet another Pacific war, outnumbered, bewildered by new rules of engagement and lacking clear support from home. Weintraub is probably right that few on the ground in Korea were fans of Douglas MacArthur.

MacArthur's War reads as a nasty book about a nasty man. But then, rarely in American history have so many brave young men been subjected to such a nasty war. Given what the GIs went through while their general fretted about cameras and microphones, perhaps we should not mind too much that Weintraub is as mean as he is accurate. In the end, what should bother us most about MacArthur is his abject insincerity and duplicity cloaked in blood and guts. George S. Patton, a far more honest man who could be even more eager for publicity, once admitted of his own propensity to sound off and offend: "I expect to take a chance because at heart the Army is not my living—and besides, I am a soldier, a simple soldier." Douglas MacArthur really was something altogether different—something perhaps far worse. **NR**

Up from Preferences

LINDA CHAVEZ

Creating Equal: My Fight Against Racial Preferences, by Ward Connerly (Encounter, 273 pp., $24.95)

In 1996, California voters enacted a ban on racial preferences in higher education, state employment, and state contracting that forever changed the debate in America over affirmative action. Now, the man chiefly responsible for winning that fight—California businessman Ward Connerly—has written an autobiographical book about this successful campaign.

Unlike many of his allies, Connerly came late to the subject of affirmative action. The man whose name would one day become nearly synonymous with the assault on racial preferences had never written or spoken out on the topic during the 1970s and '80s, when affirmative action regularly captured center stage in policy debates. Yet it was Connerly who actually succeeded in changing policy where others had merely advanced intellectual arguments or chipped away at the legal edifice propping up racial preferences.

How was it that Connerly triumphed where so many others had labored unsuccessfully? Who was this man who took on the corrupted civil-rights establishment and exposed racial preferences for what they are, a betrayal of the principle of equal opportunity?

Connerly's story—which he tells in a warm, engaging style—is a simple one. His early life was marked by the kind of by-the-bootstraps experiences you would expect of a self-made man. Connerly's father abandoned his wife and child when the boy, Wardell, was still an infant. His mother died a few years later, and Connerly spent his childhood in the homes of a beloved uncle, James, and his maternal grandmother, whom he called "Mom."

The family moved from Louisiana to Sacramento, in 1947, when Ward was about seven years old. From his Uncle James, a laborer who had only a fifth- or sixth-grade education, Connerly learned "the importance of earning respect and not taking handouts; of being a 'mane' [as Connerly remembered James pronouncing it] and taking care of yourself and your family; and knowing that your achievements are really yours because you've earned them." Connerly first had the chance to act on these principles at the age of 15. Connerly's grandmother was too old to find work but too young to receive Social Security. Since Mom had used up her meager savings and could no longer support herself and grandchild, she sought public assistance.

■

Ward Connerly learned early on that 'simple human decency doesn't have a color.'

■

For a year and a half, Mom collected a monthly welfare check of $60, which meant regular visits from a welfare caseworker. "These interviews were degrading torture for me," Connerly recalls. "They made me feel impotent and infantile." During one social-worker visit, the young Connerly decided he had to be a "mane": "As I listened to the bureaucratic drone and saw the submissive look on Mom's face, I suddenly stood up and announced that I would not accept another check. The caseworker looked at me incredulously and Mom tried to hush me. But I couldn't be stopped." Connerly took a job after school sweeping out a fabric store, where he not only earned more money than welfare provided but established relationships that taught him that "simple human decency doesn't have a color."

He worked his way through high school, then junior college, and on to Sacramento State College, where he became student-body president. In 1961, he met Ilene, a young white woman who was soon to become his

Linda Chavez is president of the Center for Equal Opportunity in Washington, D.C., and the former director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

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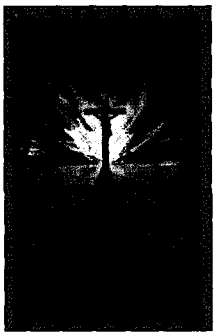

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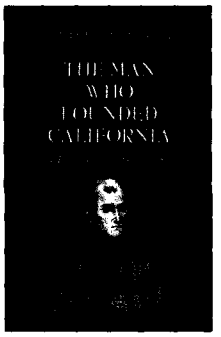

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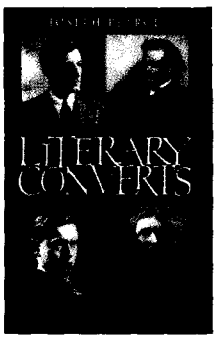

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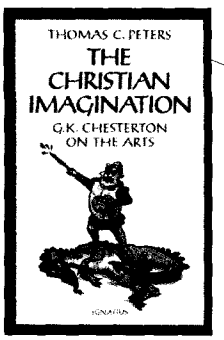

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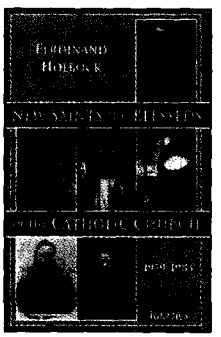

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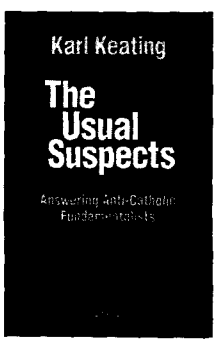

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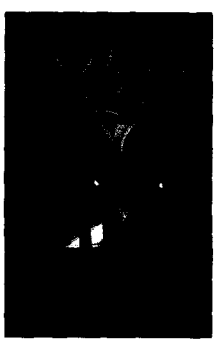

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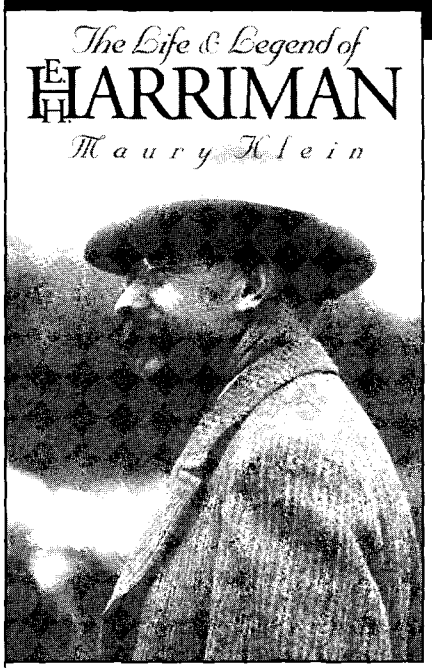

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wife—over objections from both their families. "Marrying 'outside your race' was no easy decision in 1962," Connerly writes. As Connerly found out in 1996 during the Proposition 209 campaign, the decision to marry a white woman remained controversial and would be viciously used against him by liberals—black and white—who said it showed that Connerly was a self-hating black.

After college, Connerly went to work on housing and urban development for the City of Sacramento. He might have become just another successful businessman had he not met another Californian whose career was on a somewhat different fast track. Pete Wilson was an up-and-coming state legislator when he hired Connerly as his chief consultant for the newly created Housing and Urban Affairs Committee of the California Assembly. Their friendship continued after Connerly left the committee staff and Wilson became mayor of San Diego, U.S. senator, and finally governor of California. Desiring to reward his old friend, Wilson named Connerly to the Board of Regents of the University of California, a political plum that neither man anticipated would so dramatically alter California's—indeed, the nation's—history.

Connerly did not become a regent with the intention of taking on the vast racial-preference system endemic to California's most prestigious colleges. "Without knowing much about it," he says, "I accepted affirmative action as a part of the world in which I lived; a more or less invisible and certainly unchallengeable policy with a life of its own; the white noise of our everyday social transactions." But Connerly soon found out that affirmative action as practiced in most government institutions was a great deal more than that. In fact, the policy was indistinguishable from old-fashioned racial discrimination. Connerly's epiphany came when he met with Ellen and Jerry Cook, respectively a professor of accounting and a physicist, whose son James was rejected by the UC San Diego medical school, despite his outstanding grades, test scores, and extracurricular activities. (Harvard, by contrast, accepted him.)

The Cooks met with Connerly to present him with a report Jerry Cook had written, which documented appalling

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differences between the qualifications of white and Asian students accepted at the medical school and those of blacks and Hispanics who also gained admission. According to Connerly, "the average affirmative action admit ranked in the lowest one percent, relative to the Asians and whites admitted." But Connerly's reaction was based less on the abstract numbers in the Cook report than on the simple fact that the UC system denied admission to a deserving young man because of his skin color. Just as he had surprised his grandmother and the social worker when he announced he would not accept government handouts anymore, Connerly decided that being a man in this situation required that he stand up for James and any other students who were being discriminated against because of race. He didn't agonize over the decision, worrying whether it would affect his own career. He simply made it because it was the right thing to do.

Connerly's decision to take on racial preferences at the University of California had an enormous impact. First, he was able to persuade his fellow regents to ban racial preferences in UC admissions; then he went on to lead the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI), a ballot measure to amend the state constitution to extend the ban to all public colleges and universities and prohibit racial preferences in state employment and contracting as well. After a bitter fight in which Connerly himself was vilified in the most brutal and sometimes racist manner by the liberal establishment, California voters adopted CCRI, known officially as Proposition 209, with 54 percent of the vote.

Since the CCRI campaign, Connerly has taken his fight nationwide. Washington State passed its own constitutional amendment banning preferences in 1998, and Connerly is trying to place a similar measure on the Florida ballot this year. The Florida effort has been complicated by a legal challenge now awaiting the decision of the state supreme court and by Gov. Jeb Bush's attempt to preempt Connerly's efforts by adopting an alternative affirmative-action program based on high-school class rank rather than solely on race or ethnicity. Bush's plan would guarantee admission to all students who graduate in the top 20 percent of their high-school class. So far, Bush's efforts have backfired on him, earning the governor almost as much enmity from the civil-rights establishment as Connerly receives.

Readers looking for a lengthy intellectual argument against racial preferences or an analysis of how equal-opportunity laws transmogrified into preferences in the first place won't find such material in *Creating Equal*. What they will find is a straightforward story of one man's struggle to do what is right in the face of overwhelming odds. The book succeeds, as has its author, because Ward Connerly understands better than most the hard-learned truth that race has no place in our government's policies. **NR**

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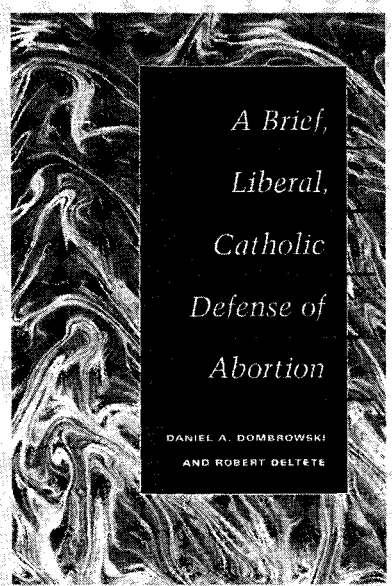

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Manic Mensch

JAMES GARTNER

Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays, 1952-1995, by Allen Ginsberg, edited by Bill Morgan (HarperCollins, 512 pp., $30)

FOR half a century, Allen Ginsberg was at the vanguard of what could be called the Religious Far Left, combining Buddhism, radical politics, and psychedelic aesthetics. In the late 1940s, Ginsberg, a shy, nerdy Columbia undergraduate, hooked up with the dashing Jack Kerouac and his wild circle of literati, later to be baptized "the Beat writers." Kerouac, who introduced Ginsberg to Buddhism, put the disaffected youth of the '50s "on the road" and paved the way for the next generation of dissenters—the Hippies.

Once again, Ginsberg was there. Along with Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, he was at the spiritual center of the antiwar movement in the '60s and '70s, theatrically chanting *Om* at all the major demonstrations (he believed the mantra's vibrations would reduce violence). He also collaborated with Timothy Leary on LSD experiments and traveled to the jungles of South America to experience the ritual use of peyote.

Until his death in 1997, Ginsberg was integrally involved in the spread of American Buddhism, founding the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at the Naropa Institute, the only accredited Buddhist university in the U.S. "He was like a bacchic/bardic/Buddhaic/Judaic Gandhi," writes Edward Sanders in a forew0rd to this volume of Ginsberg's previously uncollected essays. The black-and-white cover photo of Ginsberg standing on a New York rooftop in 1953, a dreamy cityscape behind him, evokes both an era and the essence of the man. The Jewish "homosexual virgin" from Paterson, N.J., wearing a white shirt and thick glasses, meets your eyes with a sad penetrating stare. He appears innocent and vulnerable, but also determined to express what he sees through those thick lenses.

Ginsberg lived a fascinating life, and these essays are like his intimate lost letters. Editor Bill Morgan has collected a diverse set of materials from a wide array of sources, including underground magazines, obscure avant-garde arts journals, and Ginsberg's copious drawers of unpublished material. He divides them by topic: Politics and Prophecies, Drug Culture, Mindfulness and Spirituality, Censorship and Sex Laws, Autobiographical Fragments, Literary Technique and the Beat Generation, and Writers.

Ginsberg's prose manifests the same free-associative process—the same manic flight of ideas—found in his poetry.

Despite Morgan's efforts at coherent organization, Ginsberg's prose manifests the same free-associative process—the same manic flight of ideas—found in his poetry. This makes *Deliberate Prose* riveting in places and difficult reading in others. Ginsberg's rants against the repressive American "police state" have an undeniably paranoid tone that clearly goes over the line of rationality. He believed that there was a conspiracy to delimit man's consciousness, even comparing the plight of those using "mind expanding" drugs to that of Jews in Nazi Germany. In his "Independence Day Manifesto," he writes: "Recent history is the record of a vast conspiracy to impose one level of mechanical consciousness on mankind and exterminate all manifestations of

Dr. Gartner is an assistant professor of psychiatry at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

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that unique part of human sentience, identical in all men, which the individual shares with his Creator. The suppression of contemplative individuality is nearly complete."

It would be difficult for me, as a professor of psychiatry, to miss the strong hints of mental illness in these essays. Mental illness is part of Ginsberg's life story. His famous poem "Kaddish" is a conflicted memorial to his mother, whose psychotic episodes terrorized young Ginsberg. She died in an asylum, and Ginsberg himself spent eight months in a psychiatric institute. Reading "Kaddish" or "Howl" with the eyeglasses of a mental-health professional, one suspects they represent the world's best-articulated manic experience.

In *Touched with Fire*, Kay Redfield Jamison presents impressive evidence that the majority of successful poets suffer from mental illness, especially manic-depressive disorder. Why do crazy people make the best poets? In their suffering, they touch a deep core of human experience that most of us gloss over, primarily because we can. Poets in their mania are flooded with a mélange of images and associations that would never occur to the rest of us. Thus Ginsberg manages to be both crazy and deeply wise.

Of course, just because he was paranoid doesn't mean they weren't out to get him. Ginsberg's satiric description of his own declassified intelligence files, "What Six Nice People Found in the Government Drawers," serves to remind us that we once turned the power of the state against our own intelligentsia:

> Customs has a note, from February 1970, that they caught me with pictures of "nude women in suggestive poses" in my suitcase. That was a copy of a Canadian underground newspaper in which I had some poetry . . . They [the FBI] wrote "Allen Ginsberg admits to using narcotics, having homosexual experiences and homosexual love affairs . . . He describes his background as Jewish, left wing, atheist, Russian" . . . In 1965 I had written a very brief letter in *Jewish Currents* . . . So there was a three page [FBI] document saying that *Jewish Currents*, formerly known as *Jewish Life*, is a communist front . . .

Ginsberg's dated, even demented radicalism might easily obscure his more subtle and profound psychological insight that everyday culture powerfully conditions our perceptions. This mental operating system, like Microsoft's monopolistic Windows, can homogenize our cognition and rob us of the ability to see the world as it is, with our true selves, in the present moment. Ginsberg is perpetually in search of this transcendent reality, and he is at his best when he shares his ecstatic sense of the esthetic, as in this previously unpublished description of beauty, where once again art, religion, and politics merge:

> We've all seen beauty face to face, one time or other—and said "oh my god, of course, so that's what it's all about, no wonder I was born and had all those secret weird feelings!" Maybe it was a moment of instantaneous perfect stillness in some cowpatch in the Catskills when the trees suddenly came alive like a Van Gogh painting . . . At that moment you either kill your soul and go out and make money or you pick up on the fact for good that there's something *alive* behind the universe, that nobody, but nobody, has had the guts to meet . . . let's blow up America—a false America's been getting in the way of realization of beauty—let's all get high on the soul.

A gem of surprising contemporary significance is Ginsberg's 1966 plea to Congress for the decriminalization of drugs. His testimony poignantly articulates why the war on drugs is unwinnable: It is a holy war on both sides. Ginsberg discusses the role drugs played in his most intimate religious experiences and in opening creative depths within himself he otherwise would never have plumbed. He also reveals that the second part of his most famous poem, "Howl," was written under the influence of peyote and LSD. Here, in what must have been a remarkable scene, he describes to Congress one of his drug experiences:

> Most of the day I spent in the backyard watching the cherry tree in bloom, and writing down my observations of the blue sky as seen through changed eyes—that day the openness of the sky seemed oddly like it was—a giant place in which I was on a planet. So this is an area of consciousness that psychedelic drugs bring to awareness . . . like the graceful appearance of the divine presence, as if a god suddenly made himself in my old weekly New York universe.

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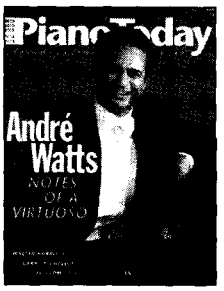

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There are millions of middle-aged Americans, with good jobs and fat retirement accounts, who will tell you (out of earshot of the kids) that drugs enhance their creativity and their sense of the numinous. As long as a large number of Americans use hallucinogens to achieve an experience of the sacred, the war on drugs can only be won if America actually becomes the police state Ginsberg imagined it to be. In his crazy way he is pleading for the most American of values, the right to find God in your own way.

The last and longest section, "Writers," is largely composed of tributes to his friends. David Adox, writing in the *New York Times*, called them "insipid thank-you notes." At least he wrote thank-you notes. If nothing else, Ginsberg was by all accounts a mensch.

Ultimately we must be grateful to Bill Morgan for collecting these essays, most of which would have drifted into obscurity. More than political diatribes, they are a window into a slice of American social and literary history, the creative process, and the soul of a beautiful man. **NR**

Observing Washington

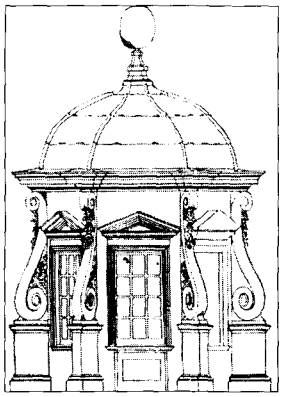
POLLY MORRICE

Two Moons, by Thomas Mallon
(Pantheon, 303 pp., $24)

TOWARD the end of Thomas Mallon's 1994 novel *Henry and Clara*, the heroine Clara Rathbone reflects on a phenomenon of post–Civil War Washington, D.C.: the influx of female clerks who toil in government offices. For the beleaguered Clara, whose husband is sliding toward insanity, these women lead seductive lives; she envies their "impoverishment and freedom and [imagines] herself as one of them."

Just such a woman is the central character of *Two Moons*, Mallon's absorbing new work of historical fiction. At 35, Cynthia May has been on her own for years, living precariously in Washington boardinghouses. As the story opens, in the spring of 1877, she seeks to better her current wages by landing a position at the U.S. Naval Observatory.

As Cynthia fills out her application forms, her life's tragedies unfold: a husband killed at Chickamauga, a child who succumbed to diphtheria. The damage wrought by the Civil War feels irreparable to Cynthia, who considers "Reconstruction," and the fact that President Rutherford B. Hayes has just declared it completed, a laughable irony. She can neither fathom nor emulate the lightheartedness of those who missed the cataclysm.



Thanks to a marked facility with numbers, Cynthia easily wins the coveted post of "computer"—one who translates the telescopic observations of the astronomers into mathematical notation. The work, at which she is unerringly accurate, inspires an unwonted sense of hope. Perhaps she might gain "some imaginative perspective from which she could regard herself as the denizen of some faraway star instead of the overheated little District of Columbia."

That perspective is soon provided by one of the observatory's astronomers. Hugh Allison is handsome, carelessly charming, and too young to have suffered in the war. His superiors regard him as somewhat unsound, and he is clearly bored by the nightly work at the observatory: tracking comets, observing double stars, even making discoveries (such as that of the two moons of Mars) that will earn the astronomers public attention and congressional largesse. Hugh's true desire is to send a signal to other life that may exist in the universe. The notion, familiar enough to modern readers, would be outlandish for Hugh's 19th-century fellows. He confides only in Cynthia, with whom he gradually begins an affair.

Given the difference in their ages, both the scientists at the observatory and Cynthia's fellow boarders regard the couple as mismatched; even Cynthia thinks of herself as too old for Hugh, or for anyone. Yet she retains enough of her beauty to attract the attentions of Roscoe Conkling, a powerful senator from New York, whose path she crosses in an astrologer's studio.

While Cynthia and Hugh are fictional characters, Conkling is drawn from life. He was a crony of Ulysses S. Grant's, a leader of the "Stalwart" faction of the Republican party, and the ruler of the New York Custom House, a font of money and patronage for the Republican machine. In Mallon's imaginative recreation, Conkling alternatively besieges Cynthia and plots his next move in a high-stakes political battle.

On both fronts, romantic and political, he faces stiff opposition. Although Conkling helped put Hayes in the White House, the ungrateful new president has taken two unpalatable steps: He has moved to reform the Custom House, source of Conkling's power, and to lift sanctions against the defeated South.

■

Thomas Mallon captures a Washington that is full of unfinished monuments but as suffused with gossip as it is today.

■

As for Cynthia, she ignores Conkling's amorous missives until Hugh falls seriously ill with malaria, an affliction attributed to the "miasmic" night air around the observatory. The sicker Hugh becomes, the more fervently he pursues his vision of projecting his image into space, using a powerful machine he must import from France. Desperate to help him, Cynthia finally turns to Conkling, who has the power to cancel the insurmountable duty his Custom House will levy on Hugh's device.

The story culminates with the un-

Polly Morrice is a writer and reviewer based in Houston.

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avoidable collision of Conkling, Cynthia, and Hugh, and with the playing out of the two men's dreams of immortality. In a sense, Hugh's desire for a sort of eternal life and Conkling's lust for endless power are two sides of the same coin. Cynthia's longings, by contrast, are far more modest. She wants marriage to Hugh, another child, and a bank account that draws 8 percent interest—goals that prove the most illusory of all.

Creating a character who wants to shine a light through the cosmos is one of several risks Mallon takes in this novel—and pulls off. He also succeeds in enlivening an episode that textbooks sometimes scurry past: the contested Hayes–Tilden election of 1876 and its aftermath. And then there is Roscoe Conkling.

As portrayed here, the so-called War God of the Norsemen is choleric and manipulative, but he is also faithful to his convictions, in his own way. He cheats on his wife, but, as a leader in the party that devised Reconstruction, he is the first to shake hands with a black senator from Mississippi. Each year he reads all of Shakespeare, "not just so he might quote him, but to find himself in the pages." They don't make politicians like Roscoe Conkling anymore, and Mallon understandably revels in this historical found object, whose only flaw as a character is his tendency to overwhelm the other actors in the story.

Those who know Mallon's previous books (he is the author of four other novels and four works of nonfiction) will find familiar pleasures here, while new readers will be happy to discover his unfailingly graceful prose, his gift for melding historical research seamlessly into a story, and, as in *Henry and Clara*, his ability to write convincingly from a woman's point of view. In *Two Moons*, Mallon also captures a Washington that is still a muddy southern town, full of unfinished monuments but as suffused with gossip as it is today.

Two Moons may not be the last novel to include a search for extraterrestrial life, but it will certainly be one of the most interesting. **NR**

Old Dog, New Tricks

ELIZABETH POWERS

Blue Angel, by Francine Prose (HarperCollins, 314 pp., $25)

OVER 2,000 years ago, Plato's *Phaedrus* warned of the erotic temptations that beset educators seeking to impart knowledge to young, impressionable minds. The sexual-harassment inquests that roil contemporary college campuses seem to suggest we have learned nothing from such insights. Yet higher education today is clearly a less exalted activity than during the Socratic age. And the radical realignment of the relations between the sexes (or should that be "genders"?) during the last half-century has only muddled things further. It is this volatile mix of postmodern sexual politics and age-old longings that Francine Prose so deftly portrays in her new novel.

Its protagonist, Ted Swenson, is a burnt-out case. Many years before the novel begins, he transformed his courtship with his wife-to-be into his first novel, *Blue Angel*. His father's suicide, an on-national-TV incineration during the Vietnam War, yielded material for *Phoenix Time*, his second, even more successful novel.

Since those moments of literary fame, Swenson (as he is called throughout this present-tense novel) has retreated into writer's block and to the hallowed halls of a pricey but mid-level New England college. Ensconced in a literature department beset with academic acrimony, he goes through the motions of teaching creative writing. The students, who have sucked in politically correct pieties with their mother's milk, have nonetheless never heard of Louisa May even when their last name happens to be Alcott. Swenson's own college-age daughter speaks the language of crisis counselors.

Though Swenson is still very much in love with his wife and has never committed an indiscretion with a student in 20 years of teaching, things are about to change. As suggested by the title of this novel—a reference to the 1930 Marlene Dietrich/Emil Jannings film *The Blue Angel*—the professor will lose his senses, in this case over a student And, as in the film (and in the 1905 Heinrich Mann novel *Professor Unrat*, on which the film was based), the object of the professor's devotion is something of a tramp. Swenson's *amour fou* is Angela Argo, a "skinny, pale redhead with neon-orange and lime-green streaks in her hair and a delicate, sharp-featured face pierced in a half-dozen places."

Francine Prose limns the details of the small world of the faculty lounge.

Yet Angela's writing is so good that Swenson finds himself obsessed with her, an attraction that is more literary than sexual. (Similarly, in Heinrich Mann's novel, Professor Unrat keeps referring to the burlesque dancer he is smitten by as "the artist.") Again, real life precipitates fiction: Angela writes a novel that feeds off of Swenson's life, "like *Lolita* rewritten from Lolita's point of view." It also brings publishing success, as Angela lands a fat contract from Swenson's high-powered New York editor. (Aren't they all high-powered in novels?)

Swenson, however, cast as predator by the weak-nerved academic powers that be, loses everything. Angela accuses him of sexual harassment, and in the hearing that follows his degradation is laid bare. The hypocrisy of these proceedings is manifest: Among those who give incriminating evidence is a fellow member of Swenson's department who for years, "as faculty adviser to the [college's] Gay Student Alliance, dated its best-looking guys."

This is Francine Prose at her best. She is a storyteller in a traditional mode, which means that readers will find

Elizabeth Powers, who teaches at Drew University, is most recently co-editor of *Pilgrim Souls: A Collection of Spiritual Autobiographies.*

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themselves swept along by her expert narrative pace, just as Ted Swenson is swept into duplicity and self-denial. It is with an intense feeling of dread that you observe him betray the people who care most about him. And anyone who has spent much time at a small liberal-arts college will certainly derive grim pleasure in recognizing the rarefied habits of people who occupy these intensely parochial settings: the ambiguous bonhomie of deans, the shifting alliances, the attentiveness to "infinitesimal shifts of status and position." Prose's forte is in limning the details of such small worlds, as with tabloid publishing in her 1986 novel *Bigfoot Dreams* or New Age feminism in 1995's *Hunters and Gatherers*.

This is the procedure of a novelist of manners, and Prose's recent essays in *Harper's* and the *Wall Street Journal* on literary and artistic subjects reveal her to be an acute observer of the American scene. But unlike British exponents of the genre, who cultivate a small turf in which characters and details are homegrown, so to speak, she is reporting in *Blue Angel* on behavior that is no longer local, no longer even American, but indicative of how, increasingly, we live worldwide. Even as products and goods circulate more freely around the globe, even as we all have more "choice," the manners of those in the Option Age have become more uniform. Prose's novel could just as well be set in, say, South Africa. Indeed, another novel touching on the subject of sexual harassment in academia, *Disgrace*, by the South African writer J. M. Coetzee, has recently appeared.

But, as with Coetzee's novel, *Blue Angel* is not simply a report on political correctness and its by-products. It is also about art, about art's relation to life, about artistic insincerity, but mostly about a man who comes alive when faced once again with literary gift. In the end, however, I had to ask myself: Is art worth it? Is it the proper vehicle to produce one man's redemption? What about the wife he seemed truly to love? Wasn't she the real article? I couldn't help thinking that maybe it wasn't writer's block that was stymieing Swenson but, rather, the hard work of loving. **NR**

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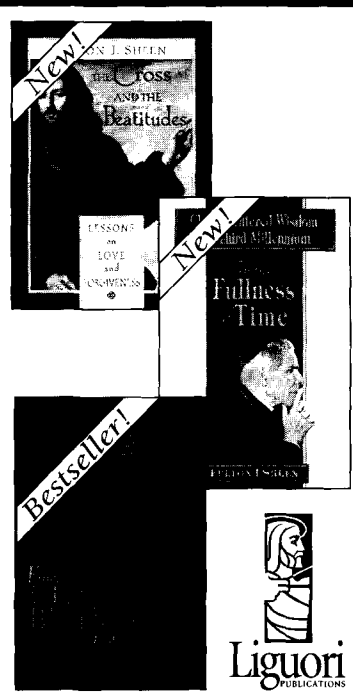

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■ FILM ■

Never the Twain

JOHN SIMON

In Régis Wargnier's ***East-West***, based on a true story, East and West meet over the very screenplay, which is by Rustam Ibragimbekov, Sergei Bodrov, Louis Gardel, and Wargnier. Though the film is mostly in French, quite a bit of it is in Russian, and the cast is both Russian and French. The story concerns a number of Russian émigrés who, after World War II, were coaxed by the Soviets into returning to live in their homeland. Instead of the promised warm reception, they are sent to labor camps or executed. Our hero, Aleksei Golovin, a much-needed doctor, is spared. He and his French wife, Marie, and young son, Seryozha, are assigned to a single room in a communal apartment in Kiev, where Aleksei is posted to the infirmary of a textile factory.

The crampedness, lack of privacy, petty wrangling among the tenants, snooping informers within the *komunalka*, make the Golovins' life appalling. When Marie tries to get a visa to go back to France, the vicious (and often murderous) commissar Pirogov merely tears up her passport. Aleksei, partly out of love for the motherland, partly out of necessity, pursues a cunctatory course, playing along with the authorities while hoping for some future amelioration. Over this, the marriage deteriorates. The head of the *komunalka*, a nice old lady who commiserated with Marie (in French!), is denounced and executed; her 17-year-old grandson, Sasha, becomes Marie's only confidant.

She helps Sasha develop into an Olympic swimmer, which should lead to competing abroad and defection. She also befriends Gabrielle, a famous French actress on tour in Kiev, who promises to help her get out. By this time, Aleksei has become a seemingly perfect government toady, and even intercepts Gabrielle's letters to Marie.

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Marital relations between them cease, and Aleksei becomes involved with his factory's (female) director.

Years pass, but Marie and Sasha are repeatedly foiled in their escape plans, even as their relationship becomes closer. There are scary, depressing, and sometimes even exhilarating adventures as Aleksei becomes the bedmate of a vulgar neighbor woman, and Seryozha is buffeted between his parents. That is enough plot summary, though there is plenty more.

East-West is a mixture of sharply observed political and psychological detail with melodramatic events that, however true, preclude much deepening beyond the thriller level. Yet the mixture is artfully handled, and, except for Pirogov, the characters tend not to be all black or white. Marie herself becomes hard, but in the end manages some conjugal feelings for Aleksei, who proves to have genuinely redeeming features.

■

The dialogue in *East-West* is intelligent throughout, the suspense always riveting.

■

The dialogue is intelligent throughout, the suspense always riveting. Amazingly, two of the principals—Oleg Menchikov as Aleksei, and Sergei Bodrov Jr. as Sasha—being monolingual, had to learn their French lines by rote. They came through remarkably, although Sandrine Bonnaire (Marie) later observed how weird it was when Menchikov, with whom she hardly communicated offscreen, suddenly spoke his part in near-perfect French. Under such difficult circumstances, the smoothness achieved is impressive; as Gabrielle, Catherine Deneuve provides condignly staunch support.

Backed up by an efficient score from Patrick Doyle and atmospheric cinematography from Laurent Dailland, Wargnier has directed with a fine sense for minute particulars and powerful use of crosscutting. Mlle Bonnaire, always a trenchant actress, has grown with age into a softer, maturer, more womanly presence. *East-West* is not a great film, but, until such a one comes along, will do very nicely.

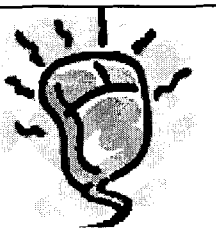
■ Stuart Blumberg's screenplay for ***Keeping the Faith*** is a wonder of manipulation and derivativeness. A tomboyish girl and the two young boys who grow up to become rivals in love for her is as old a *topos* as ever dragged its beard through fiction, drama, or film. As a boy, I loved Percival C. Wren's *Beau Geste* and its sequels, and enjoyed, if I remember correctly, something similar in Sinclair Lewis's *Ann Vickers*. In due time, I progressed to *Wuthering Heights* and Thomas Mann's *Tonio Kröger*.

In *Keeping the Faith*, it is the Jewish Jake and the Catholic Brian and Anna who had wonderful fun in the not-so-mean streets of New York until Anna's family moved to the West Coast. Jake became a rabbi, Brian a priest, and Anna a high-powered business executive. Later, she is transferred to a spectacular New York office, where she relaxes by spying through binoculars on sexual mischief in a facing skyscraper.

Anna resumes her friendship with Brian and Jake, both of whom she finds charming and attractive, and both of whom fall in love with her. Jake's problem has been that he cannot find the right woman, not even with the help of his oversolicitous mother. Brian's problem is that he is a priest. Both men are unconventional men of God: Brian preaches things like "God doesn't like solo artists. We're gonna be the Fugees here, no Lauryn Hills." To goose up his congregation's singing, Jake springs a black gospel choir on the vocally slack faithful. Obviously, both draw capacity crowds to their houses of worship.

Jake and Anna start an affair, which makes Anna fall in love him. But when it is time for commitment, Jake backs out, only partly because Anna isn't Jewish. When, without naming him, she confesses her hapless love for Jake to Brian, the priest mistakes himself for the object of her feelings and proclaims his readiness to leave the priesthood, only to come to a rude awakening. Find out the rest for yourself if you must.

At least Edward Norton, who directed and plays Brian, has genuine appeal; as Jake, Ben Stiller is probably the most physically and histrionically repellent actor in Hollywood, with the possible exception of Nicolas Cage. He owes his career in part to being the son of Stiller and Meara, and in part to his very



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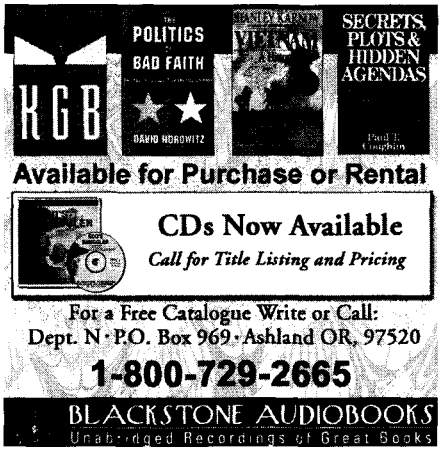
unsightliness, there always being a niche or two for stars with whom the homely and rejected can identify themselves.

With Stiller's lack of charisma, a movie deficient in other ways as well is totally knocked off balance. Such interesting supporting actors as Eli Wallach and Ron Rifkin are lost in the shuffle, though the film director Milos Forman manages to score in the tiny part of a wise older priest. My other favorite here is Brian George, who plays an Indian bartender to whom, in a framing device, Brian recounts the film's story. Just the way George says, "C'mon, a priest and a rabbi? I think I've heard this one," sets up more promise than the rest fulfills.

Of marginal interest, too, is how well Anne Bancroft (real name: Anna Maria Luisa Italiano) incarnates a Jewish mother. But what better schooling than being married to Mel Brooks (real name: Melvin Kaminsky)? **NR**



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▪ BOOKS IN BRIEF ▪

Hating Whitey and Other Progressive Causes, by David Horowitz (Spence, 300 pp., $24.95)

WAS there a David Horowitz in Bosnia, a Cassandra warning of the cataclysm to come? For most ethnic conflicts are fairly predictable, and it's not too difficult to identify who is going to start them. The underlying message of this collection of essays is that race relations in this country too are being deliberately poisoned, with potentially disastrous results. The culprits are a grubby group of demagogues and ideological hucksters, given their opportunity by the development of identity politics.

It is worth reading what Horowitz has to say. After all, he was once a prominent '60s radical, a "progressive" *pur et dur*. Now, thankfully, he's a conservative (of sorts), but he still writes like an old-fashioned left-wing polemicist. His prose is splendidly savage and invigoratingly rude. David Horowitz has a message to deliver, and if he offends someone in the process, that's just too bad.

This is an angry book, and with good reason. The "progressive causes" related by the author are full of bullying, career destruction, race baiting, rape, and murder. We may giggle about political correctness, but it is, as Horowitz explains, no less than "the stuff that totalitarian dreams are made of." As a former Leninist, he understands how the Left plays the game and the tactics it uses.

The most worrying of these is the manipulation of ethnic antagonism. Today's diversity politics have often been reduced to little more than the "expression of racial paranoia." The consequences could be terrifying. For as Horowitz warns, "by projecting their fear and aggression onto those around them, paranoids create enemies too."

Sure sounds like Bosnia to me.

—ANDREW STUTTAFORD

Hard Green: Saving the Environment from the Environmentalists: A Conservative Manifesto, by Peter Huber (Basic, 224 pp., $25)

WHEN it comes to the environment, conservatives are often content simply to be right about liberals' being wrong. It's understandable: From the activists who warned 25 years ago of an ice age and now rant about global warming, to Julia "Butterfly" Hill's living in a giant redwood tree for two years, liberal environmentalists make fat targets.

In *Hard Green*, Peter Huber makes a convincing case that conservatives should take the environment more seriously. One reason is that liberal environmentalism ("Soft Green") isn't just misguided, it's harmful. Soft Greens base apocalyptic predictions on computer models that can't accurately recreate past conditions, much less predict future ones, and favor things like organic farming and wind power—which sound friendly but in fact require the destruction of massive amounts of green space.

Instead, Huber offers a conservative environmentalism ("Hard Green"), the goal of which is to increase and preserve what Teddy Roosevelt called the "silent places, unworn of man." This means embracing the free market, and technology such as the modern pesticides that help farmers grow more food on much less land. In addition, Huber advocates expanding the national parks and forests by both private and public means.

One might wish that Huber had packed *Hard Green* with more hard data, but his thesis remains compelling. He recognizes that while most people agree that Julia Hill is loony, they are happy that redwoods are around. *Hard Green* is based on a rational analysis but inspired by the beauty of nature. Huber borrows a page from T.R., conservation's patron saint, who "loved nature the way a man first loves a woman: selfishly, because he finds her beautiful and exciting, because he needs her desperately, however little she may need him. And what is wrong with that?" Not much.

—CRISTOPHER RAPP

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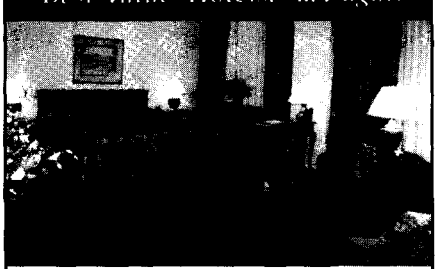

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The Problem of The Innocent

NEW YORK, APRIL 11

FOUR events catch the attention in the ongoing debate over capital punishment. The abolitionists have enlisted the support of George Will, an enormously important development in a quarrel that tends to separate liberals and conservatives. What prompted his enlistment was the publication of a book by three well-known defense attorneys called *Actual Innocence*, which documents a list of innocents destined for execution, saved at the last minute by successful appellate pleading or by the introduction of exculpatory evidence. If the figures work retroactively, then one out of seven executed Americans (there have been 624 since the reintroduction of capital punishment in 1976) was, in fact, innocent.

Meanwhile, the governor of Illinois has imposed a moratorium on executions, motivated by the same doubts that won over George Will. On an entirely different stage, one organization devoted to abolition publicly deplored the absence of political agitation on the question by American blacks and Hispanics. They are told repeatedly that they are the primary victims of careless justice, but still, Amnesty International complains, such momentum as there is to abolish or at least suspend executions in the 38 states that authorize a death penalty is done primarily by whites.

Not directly related, but eye-catching: Patti Davis (Reagan), in the current issue of *Time* magazine, reflects on the pending question of whether John Hinckley should be released from the asylum where he has been tended since attempting to assassinate her father, President Reagan, in 1981. Ms. Davis pleads eloquently to keep Hinckley in tethers, and raises the interesting obdurate question: If sentenced to life imprisonment, should a felon reasonably hope for mercy at some point down the line? Is it merciful to rule out execution, and also to rule out eventual commutation of sentence?

And then, the London *Independent* reports on the paradoxical plight of Ian Brady. He is now 62, and in 1966 he and his girlfriend were convicted of the torture-killings (the "Moors murders") of several children. Nobody doubted their guilt back then, and an overwhelming majority desired their execution. Since the death penalty had already been abolished, they got life, and the problem now is that Mr. Brady wants to die, to which end he has embarked on a hunger strike; British officials are forcing him to stay alive, and the argument is whether convicted felons (or, for that matter, nonconvicted non-felons) should be allowed to die when they feel like it.

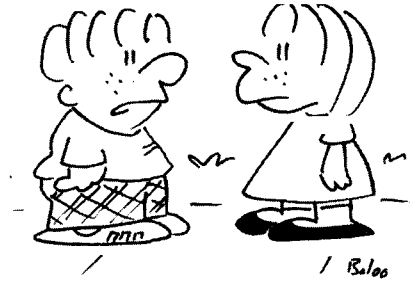
One of the arguments against execution is the disparate skills of defense attorneys. There is zero question about that, but reflection on its implications requires us to acknowledge that the very best defense attorneys sometimes succeed not merely in mitigating justice, but in frustrating it altogether. The people who make odds would probably give you 3–1 that anyone defended by the three authors of *Actual Innocence* (Barry Scheck, Peter Neufeld, and Jim Dwyer) will not only avoid execution, he'll avoid another day in jail.

But then, as Hurricane Carter (the vindicated boxer had up for murder) has said: "You can't expect perfect justice in an imperfect world." So the question then to ask is whether *any* incidence of unjust executions invalidates capital punishment. If so, what is the critical number?

The ratio quoted by the authors (one out of seven) relies heavily on DNA evidence, posthumously adduced to establish the innocence of the condemned prisoner or even of the executed prisoner. Will the existence of DNA procedures affect strongly the dismaying ratio? How influential will DNA be in protecting the innocent? But does that make a difference if, post-DNA, it were reduced to one in 25 innocents executed?

And the profoundest question is left with us: If many innocent people are being convicted, that is the central concern: not merely that some of them are executed, but that some of them should have spent any time at all in jail.

On this point the abolitionists founder, because the case for capital punishment (it is just retribution; it discourages murder) should not depend on the vicissitudes of prosecution and conviction.



"I'm the product of a mixed marriage—my Dad has a PC and my Mom has a Mac."

Elvis's Bad Break

MEMPHIS, APRIL 18

IF you think *you* were hurt by the market, think what happened to Elvis Presley. So you don't care what happened to Elvis Presley? You would care if you stopped by at Graceland, which 700,000 people do every year, one-quarter of them foreign-born. So that's all very interesting, but why the economic blues? Did they cause him to sing a song or whatever about how lonesome he became one day after his market went down?

Even if you care not at all about Elvis Presley, never listened to one of his songs or, if you did, certainly didn't intend to listen to another, he was an important musical figure. But he blanked out in the mid-Seventies from drug bloat, so why can't we get on with somebody else?

We can and do, but how to account for almost 1 million people going to Graceland every year? And here's something else. He died on August 16 (1977), and a year after that, a few fans began to congregate on the eve of the anniversary of his death, carrying, each one, just one candle. They would walk up and down in front of Graceland. But in 1981 the property was opened to guided tours, so beginning then, the candlelight vigil makes its way in and around the Graceland preserve, passing by the little graveyard where Elvis is buried.

Mr. Jack Soden, who is the chief executive officer of the Graceland operation, tried trimming the crowd down, but after a few years had no alternative than to permit the earliest arrivers to

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begin their walking vigil at five in the afternoon. By dawn the succeeding day the pathways were drenched from the wax of the memorial candles. Are they older people? After all, Elvis was born in 1935, became famous in 1954—are these old baby boomers who come to Graceland? No. There are still many teenagers who come every day. Graceland doesn't anticipate ending its operation when contemporaries of Elvis die off, which will begin to happen about ten years from now.

But what was his economic crash, that could distract attention from our own free-fall? The man who managed Elvis's affairs was a mysterious, assertive marketer who called himself "Colonel" Parker. He was a libidinous patron of the casinos. The speculation is that when he made the proposal to Elvis in 1975, the Colonel terribly needed some cash. He persuaded (or simply instructed) Elvis to sell to RCA all of his recording royalties as of that moment. The deal was $5 million and the Colonel got his customary 50 percent. Well, those royalties now earn $25 million per year. The bummest deal in musical history.

The same curiosity that brings visitors to Graceland inevitably prompts them to ask to see the second floor, where Elvis lived and died in grisly stupor. The answer is a flat, ingratiating *no*. That is the deal, imposed unsparingly by Lisa Marie, the daughter and heir. Why should anybody want to visit those quarters and ogle at the seven-foot diameter shower in the bathroom and the voluptuous bedroom, an extension of Elvis's resoundingly vulgar tastes?

A silly question: Why do people want to poke into the spot in the warehouse where the killer waited for President Kennedy? Why the allure of the balcony on which Martin Luther King strolled, awaiting the fatal bullet? Elvis Presley is something of a legend, and it is in very full display at Graceland. There is his pink Cadillac, and his motorcycles, and his big jet airplane and his little jet airplane, and the costumes he wore, which would have dazzled the Pharaohs, and the tractors he bought having zero use for them. But there also, in dazzling numbers, are the gold records he won from the industry, authentic memorabilia of a voice and manner and style that dumbfounded, enthralled, and repelled the largest musical audience ever got together by a single musical artist.

What are they there at Graceland to venerate? An aspect, perhaps, of the spiritual inclination of the American people, who do not require that the memory being venerated should have been a martyr or a prophet. Just someone truly singular and mythogenic, who contributed to his own legend his suicidal ending as a victim of the drugs he inveighed against with the strange, disquieting, appealing innocence that marked his entire life.

Disarming the U.N.

NEW YORK, APRIL 25

THE United Nations is off on one of its anti-American fliers, this one based on our alleged indifference to nuclear weapons. Secretary General Kofi Annan added his voice to the general clamor, with special emphasis on the danger of antimissile programs. He capped the talk by using the old rhetorical war-horse, the threat of "a new arms race."

That argument should stop cold any pretenses to reasoned discourse on policy alternatives for the United States. To begin with, there is no power on earth which could participate in an arms race with us, now that the Soviet Union does not exist. And then the concept of an arms race has to do with supremacy, but what is truly going on is a race for sufficiency. There were, at the U.N. conference about disarmament, envoys whose mission it was to complain that they had complied with the international mandate against the development of nuclear weapons. How can this be to our advantage, unless in return for abstinence we get a reduction in the inventories of incumbent nuclear powers? And yes, it is correct to complain about nuclear weapons elsewhere, specifically in India and Pakistan, and, going back a generation, in Israel.

Now on the argument of simple reduction in inventories, Mrs. Albright was decisive and convincing. Since the end of the Cold War, she pointed out, the U.S. has trimmed its inventory of nuclear weapons by 60 percent, and NATO its, by 85 percent.

What Mrs. Albright failed to emphasize is the fulcrum of the entire disarmament scene, which is that disarmament programs tend to be flatly ignored by countries whose priorities aren't approved by disarmament organizations. There are countries out there whose overriding ambition is at least for defensive parity and for an umbrella to protect them in their own expansionist designs.

To make this point ad hominem, it is reasonable to assume that Iraq wants nuclear development in order to threaten the peace of the Mideast. And reasonable to assume that Iran and Libya will proceed with whatever it is they are up to in their clandestine operations.

The focus of the current argument has to do with the superstitious hold of the old ABM Treaty of 1972. The failure to pull out was a regrettable mistake of President Reagan. It was a still graver mistake of President Bush, when the asphyxiative bonds of the treaty's provisions became clearer and when he passed by the opportunity to declare the treaty null and void. On to President Clinton, whose movements are affected by the ideology of disarmament, which obstinately refuses to distinguish between defensive and offensive weapons.

But the defense of the treaty is vociferous. At the U.N. conference the voice of Jonathan Granoff was heard in the background. He is cochairman of the American Bar Association's committee on arms control and disarmament, who in an interview on events declared that "the scuttling of arms control through ballistic-missile defense . . . is against the heritage of the Republican party." That, of course, was a shot fired across the bow of the Good Ship W., one more show in the war against the development of missile defense. For a while in January, as when President Clinton in his State of the Union address gave cautious encouragement to missile defense, it seemed as if the tide were turning. But the dogged skepticism of ideological opposition is in full flower. Ms. Frances FitzGerald, the weepy historian of American strategic mistakes, has weighed in with an entire book (*Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War*), whose thesis is that missile defense was always a pipe dream, that it has cost over $60 billion, and that the sophisticated scientific community knows it doesn't have a chance at any time in the future.

That barrage will continue, and candidate Bush will need to pay stern attention to any movement by President Clinton that would hinder a future government from effective stakeouts in the hard work of assuring the peace by preempting the aggressive reach of potential enemies.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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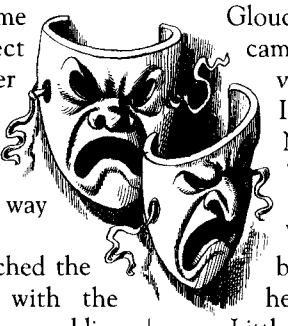
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

I SWORE up and down to everybody, including WFB, that I absolutely, positively would not write about Elián González. It was a matter of perverse pride, the way I used to feel back when we native Washingtonians were not allowed to vote. Like being disfranchised in a democracy, being a columnist who ignores Elián is the sort of thing that suits my temperament.

I knew that finding something else to write about would make me what the politically correct tactfully call "subject-matter challenged," but just how challenged I had no idea. This, then, is the story of what happened to me on my way to deadline.



Elián's centrality has reached the plateau once associated with the expression, "the bride at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral." Updated for the cable era, it is now rendered as "all Elián, all the time."

We have been through these monomanias before, but this one puts our earlier obsessions to shame. O.J. and Monica might have overwhelmed other news, but they did not appropriate it and make it their own. Events that had nothing to do with decapitation or oral sex simply remained non-decapitation and non-oral-sex news stories.

This time is different. Non-Elián events have an eerie tendency to turn into Elián events, especially when they promise to be good column material, such as Rep. James P. Moran's brush with an 8-year-old alleged carjacker.

According to the congressman, he had just pulled into the rec-center parking lot to pick up his sons, when suddenly he was confronted by a little black boy with an "icy stare" who said he had a gun and told Moran to give up his car keys or else he would shoot him. Moran overpowered him, picked him up, and carried him into the rec center, where the gun was found to be a baby bottle.

The story was actually about racial profiling of children, but it was caught in the undertow du jour and fitted out for a sea change. Right on cue, the kid said, "I thought he was going to kidnap me or kill me." His parents threatened to sue Moran for false imprisonment, and Moran threatened to press charges if, after consulting the authorities, he decided it was—are you ready?—"in the best interest of the child."

This phrase has turned into an entrance cue on a par with "Hark! Here Gloucester comes!" As soon as I came to it, my mind filled with visions of backyard slides, and I had trouble concentrating. Nor, it seemed, was I alone. The story normally would have been red meat for the *Washington Times*'s vigilant black metro columnist, but her mind appeared to be in Little Havana too. "Heaven save us," she wrote, "from the messes adults create when they get so caught up in their own agendas that they lose sight of the fact that they are using children as political pawns." Moran, a former heavyweight boxer, had morphed into macho Lázaro González or macho Fidel Castro, take your pick.

Nothing gets my writer juices flowing like an idiotic apology. We were treated to a real corker recently, but a column no sooner came to me than I had to scuttle it. Why did Peter Benchley pick this, of all times, to apologize to the great white shark? Life was imitating art—the art in this case being Little Havana's garish poster crammed full of gulls, crosses, Jesus, flowers, the Virgin, boats, rosaries, flags, rainbows, saints, and dolphins, and in the middle of it all, Elián on his inner tube.

One look at Benchley's guilt-ravaged face told me that he had seen it too, and was doing penance for *Jaws* because the sharks had miraculously left Elián alone, proving that they had been misunderstood all along.

The trouble with trying to figure out how to avoid writing about Elián is that you have to keep thinking about him. He becomes the prism through which everything must be viewed, until the cable of your mind is all Elián, all the time.

It does no good to switch from the news to escapist fare because you will only come up against the iron laws of mathematics just in time to watch them melt: Parallel lines might never meet, but parallel Eliáns do. *Masterpiece Theater*'s new *David Copperfield* stars Janet Reno as Betsey Trotwood, Greg Craig as her simpleminded factotum, Mr. Dick, and Maxine Waters as Miss Murdstone.

When you've had enough of that, try the old-movie channels. If you're as lucky as I am, you can catch *Boy on a Dolphin*. Cousin Marisleysis is played by Sophia Loren, who was miscast; when she emerges from the sea in a wet blouse, you know she doesn't need to be hospitalized for anything.

My eeriest experience came while watching one of International Paper's black-and-white commercials featuring children talking about their fathers' jobs. This one shows a grimly determined little girl with a bloodless, Nurse Ratched air about her, making her father an enormous ice-cream sundae and taking it to him in the yard. We've all seen it dozens of times, but this time I really saw it.

The father isn't in a yard. He's seated all alone at a bare picnic table in the middle of a treeless nowhere that looks like the steppes of Asia or a moonscape. Then it hit me: This ad is about Cuba, a banished father, and a kid who is just beginning to understand power.

Child-struck America is not ready for a Helen of Troy. Our idea of a sexy geopolitical crisis is a custody battle, but since Elián's stay might last as long as Helen's, what shall we do with him?

PeoplePC can hire him to do the Spanish-language version of little Marc John Jeffries's spiel. He already has a cellular phone and enough gold chains to sink him and his inner tube as well; the logical next step is having an agent.

Better yet, the Clintons have talked of adopting a child. Why not Elián? If we're lucky, it would reprise "The Ransom of Red Chief," the O. Henry story about a pair of klutzy kidnappers who snatch a kid so bratty that they end up having to pay his parents to take him back. **NR**

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